AUGUST 2005
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OutSmart

Houston's gay ans magazine

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ALSO INSIDE

- Return of the Stonewall Democrats
- A new look for Omega House
- Pride 2005 photos
- Together at last: *Girl Play* mates Dom DeLuise and Mink Stole

Derek Mayo

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Derek Mayo is one of the musicians we profile beginning on page 24
Photo: Jill Hunter
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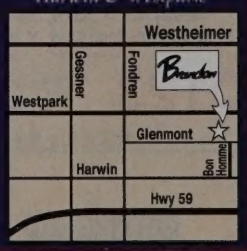

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Letters

BIG HUG

I was so amazed and relieved to read that Vera Johnson ["Vera's Heart," March *OutSmart*] is still "in the trenches" in the fight against AIDS, long after most social workers become emotionally drained and need to leave this field for their own health (as myself). Vera has always been an integral part of the big picture, in terms of service provision and in contributing to the community of other caregivers. I really wish the readers could spend a day with an HIV caregiver to see what these people endure. I'd really like to give Vera a big hug. I only hope that someday I'll see her on the Grand Marshal float in our Gay Pride Parade. God bless you, Vera!

John Cain
Houston

POPULAR PATTI

I loved the [Patti] LaBelle interview ["Classic Lady," July *OutSmart* online]. I laughed out loud at her campy answers, and cried over the sheer beauty of her spirit. The story was truly inspirational, and her words of encouragement to remain strong just hit home significantly for me. Thank you for printing this story, and of course we all thank Patti.

William Curtis
San Francisco

CORRECTION

We misspelled John Champeau's name in the July issue ("Island Life"). Champeau owns The Market on Market in Galveston.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Sally Sheklow, "OutLoud" columnist, received both first- and second-place trophies in the magazine column category at the June 18 Houston Press Club Lone Star Awards. In June, Sheklow began contributing a regular segment, called "That Time of the Month," to the Eugene, Oregon, affiliate of the Air America radio network. Another writer who contributes regularly to *OutSmart*, D.L. Groover, received second place at the Lone Star Awards in the newspaper arts and entertainment commentary/criticism category (newspapers over 100,000 circulation) for work he did for the *Houston Press*.

ATTENTION, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

We are updating the community resource guide section for our website. Please send info about your nonprofit, fundraising, or social organization to editor@outsmartmagazine. Provide a current contact name and info (include mailing and e-mail addresses and telephone number) along with a brief description of your group. The revised guide will appear soon at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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ROYAL TREATMENT. Chanel Cartier (c) is the sole candidate for the new Imperial Court of Houston-Space City Empire empress, and Sir Korwin (l) and Marc Cohen are emperor candidates. One of the two hard-working, fundraising court organizations in town, ICOH opens voting on August 6 in Galveston and August 11 and 13 in Houston (details: www.outsmartmagazine.com). The royal couple will be announced at the August 20 Prince & Princess Ball at Rich's Houston. This month, ICOH also begins the 2005 Space City Idol competition series with casting calls at Mary's on August 3, 10, and 17. The first competition night is August 24. Tips garnered by all contestants will support the AIDS Foundation Houston Camp Hope.

Photographed by Kelly Catchings

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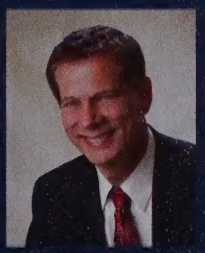

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MARY SUMMERS

ISLAND FAITHFUL. For months, a group in Galveston has met to consider establishing a Metropolitan Community Church congregation on the Island. August 20 is a critical date in that process, explains Ron Shelby of the hopeful Harbor MCC. "Reverend Darlene Garner, who is the equivalent of a bishop in the MCC structure, will be in from Monterrey, Mexico, to take a final head count and determine whether to make us a full-fledged church," he says. The 5 p.m. event will take place at William Temple Episcopal Center. We photographed six of the Harbor group at Sunny Beach (on an afternoon Hurricane Emily churned out in the Gulf): Matt Mitchell (standing, l–r), Sandy Hardin, Sally Garner, Angela Butler (in baseball cap), Karl Lewis, and (in front) Ron Shelby with Babuska.

Photographed by Renee Rodriguez

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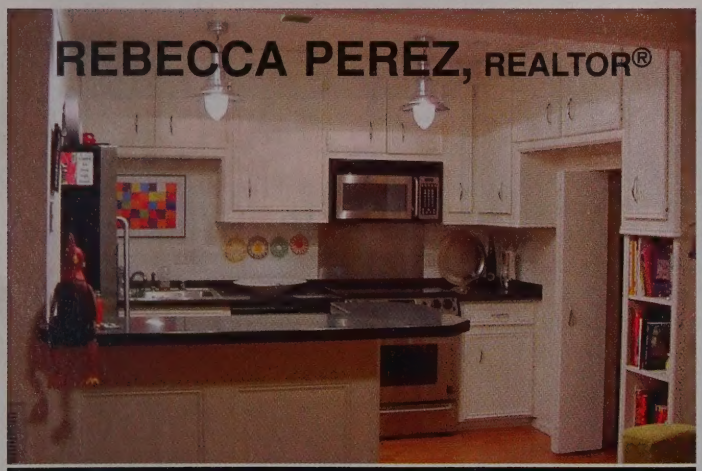

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DATEBOOK

Houston GLBT Political Caucus holds its candidate endorsement meeting on Aug. 3, 7–8 p.m., at Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: 713/521-1000, www.hglpc.org.

On Aug. 6, **Sippora Gallery** opens the exhibition *Body Language*, featuring 10 artists including Kermit Eisenhut, with a 6–9 p.m. reception. Details: 713/520-1085, www.sippora.com.

Rocco Errico speaks on "What Jesus Believed and Taught: The Authentic Gospel According to Jesus" at **Unity Church of Christianity** at the Aug. 7, 9–11 a.m., Sunday service, then at an Aug. 7, 2:30–5:30, workshop and an Aug. 8, 7:30–9:30 p.m., lecture. $15 workshop, $10 lecture. Details: 713/787-3490, www.unityhouston.org.

To begin its summer/fall season, **Lone Star Volleyball Association** continues open play on Aug. 7, 4 p.m., at Willowbrook Sports Complex. Free for new members. Details: www.lsva.org.

The Ripcord is the venue for the first **Internet Rescue** event for gay men 21 and up on Aug. 7, 4–7 p.m. Details: BJ Smith, bjsdesigns@hotmail.com.

STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys) meets on Aug. 7, 7 p.m., at Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: sandyodaniel@yahoo.com.

Log Cabin Republicans-Houston hosts an Aug. 13, 5 p.m., barbecue at the home of Alex Wathen, former chapter president. RSVP: Houston@logcabin.org.

On Aug. 20, **Houston Area Bears** holds its monthly 9 p.m.–1 a.m. social at Mary's. Details: www.houstonareabears.com.

Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History interviews John Kellett at the quarterly **Sunday History Series** program on Aug. 21, 4 p.m., at Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: www.gcam.org.

Helping TransGenders Anonymous meets on Monday, 7–9 p.m., at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Details: Brenda Thomas, Brenda@brendat.com, www.brendat.com/hcda.htm.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

SOFTBALL JOCKS BOUND FOR SERIES

DALTON DEHART

Seven Montrose Softball League teams will play in the August 15–20 Gay Softball World Series in San Diego. Local teams that won playoffs last month to qualify for the series are the Bucks, Chaos, Clippers, Houston Force, Houston Meteors, Southern Comfort, and Wolves (who were photographed during an event at Guava Lamp on May 22).

NEW CAMPAIGN FIGHTS MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

Glen Maxey, the first openly gay elected official in the state, is the director of No Nonsense in November, the campaign mounted by Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas to defeat the anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment on the November 8 ballot. Maxey, a Baytown native, made history in 1991 when he was elected to the legislature from his Austin district.

Beyond the fight against the amendment, the recently unveiled No Nonsense effort aims to strengthen an allied movement in Texas, Maxey told the *Dallas Voice*: "There is no doubt in my mind that on November 9, the progressive and GLBT communities will have cobbled together a coalition like we have never had before." Details: www.NoNonsenseinNovember.com.

NO NONSENSE in NOVEMBER

SMITH SETS 'NET RESCUE

BJ Smith (pictured) hosts his first Internet Rescue event for gay men 21 and older "who spend any time online and are searching for something more than a deeper relationship with their keyboard," he explains, on August 7, 4–7 p.m., at The Ripcord. "This is the first of what I hope to be many events that are designed to bring people out from behind their keyboards."

More News Briefs →

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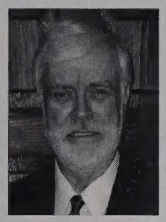

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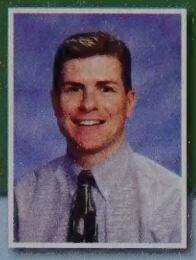

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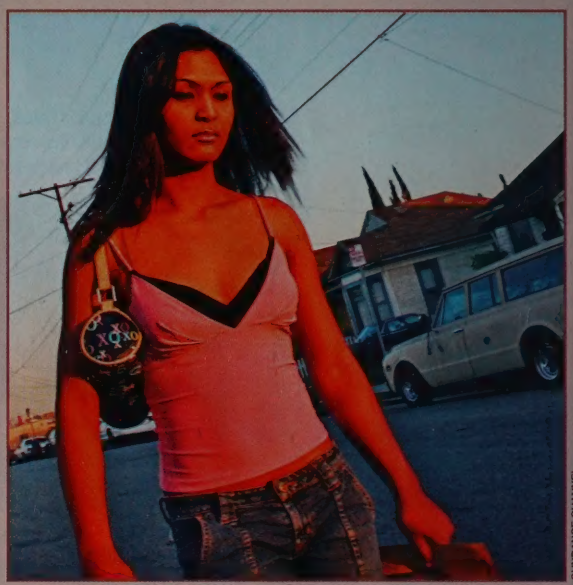
NAT'L AIDS EVENT SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The Texas host committee of the U.S. Conference on AIDS, set for September 29–October 2 in Houston, is seeking volunteers. Interested individuals can attend the monthly committee meeting on August 12, 2 p.m., at the Houston Department of Health and Human Services or contact co-chair Brenda Thomas at 713/794-9113, Brenda.Thomas@cityofhouston.net.

FILM FEST SCREENS SOON

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival steering committee and volunteers are planning the ninth annual event set for September 8–19. Features include a preview of *TransGeneration*, an eight-part Sundance Channel documentary series about four transgender college students (at right, Raci, from the series). DiverseWorks presents the September 13, 8 p.m., screening. Read more about the festival in next month's *OutSmart*.



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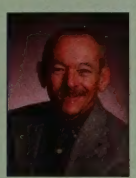

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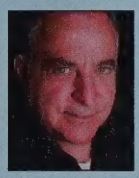

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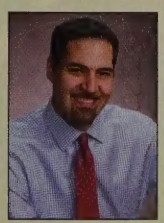

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COURTESY JD DOYLE

RADIO HOST WINS AWARD

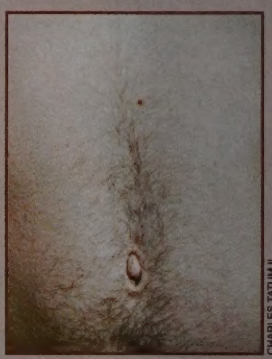
JD Doyle (l), producer/host of *Queer Music Heritage*, received an award at the National Federation of Community Broadcasting conference in Baltimore on April 15. The federation honored him for his 2004 "Queer Music Before Stonewall" program. After the ceremony, Doyle posed with Ginny Z. Berson, federation vice president, who also co-founded Olivia Records, the groundbreaking women's music label, in the '70s. *Queer Music Heritage* airs during *Queer Voices* on KPFT (see page 80).

GEPHARDT SPEAKS HERE

In addition to keynoting at the August 7 Uncommon Legacy Houston Extra Mile Awards Brunch, as we reported last month, Chrissy Gephardt will speak at an August 6 Victory Fund event at the home of local activists April Ayers and Liz James. Elena Guajardo, the lesbian candidate recently elected to the San Antonio city council, will also appear with Gephardt, the lesbian daughter of 2004 presidential candidate Richard Gephardt. Details: events@victoryfund.org.

PHOTOGRAPHER IN REALLY BIG SHOW

Stop by Lawndale Art Center before August 6 to catch pictures by openly gay photographer Charles Tatum II in *The Big Show*, the prestigious annual exhibition of work by emerging Houston-area artists.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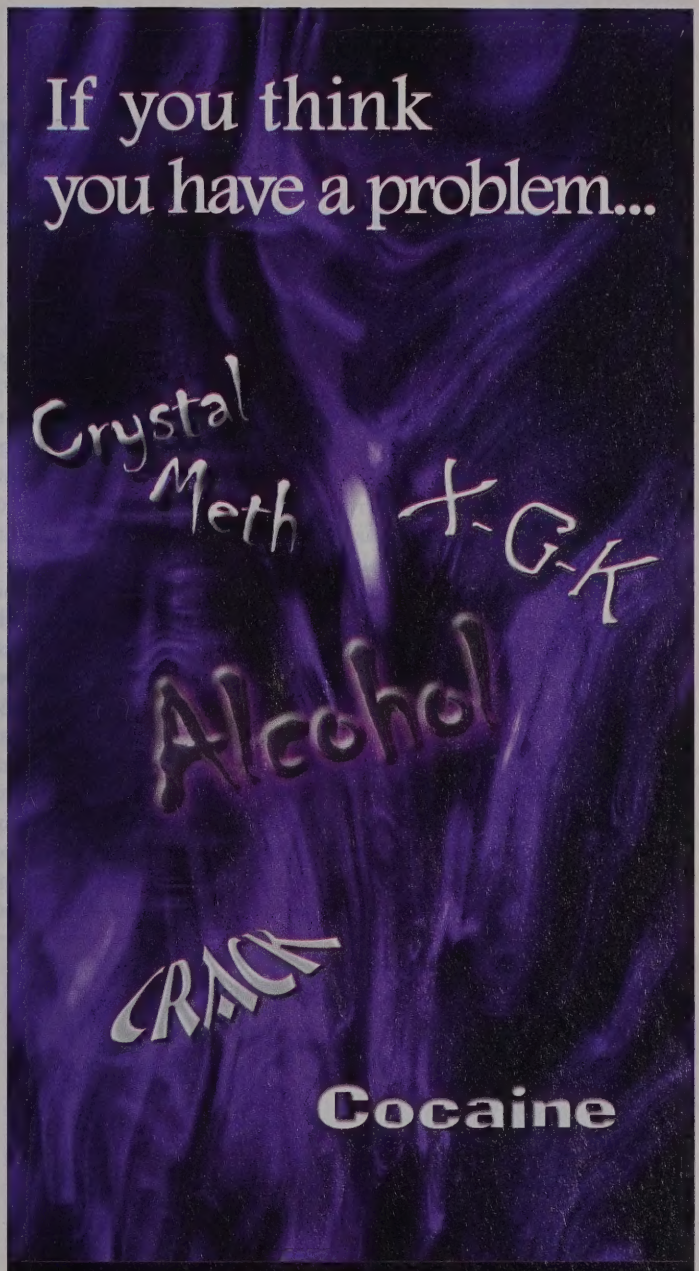

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LeftOut

by Daryl Moore

ONE HELL OF A WOMAN

An "inadequate tribute" to activist Helen Cassidy (November 22, 1940–June 11, 2005)

I have been writing this column for more than 10 years now because a good friend of mine, Helen Cassidy, encouraged me to. It was the early '90s, and I had just read an article written by my conservative counterpart. I was bitching about it to Helen when she interrupted me and told me to "do something about it." So I did. I wrote a letter to the editor, and this column was the result.

For the past decade, Helen has been editing, commenting on, criticizing, and sometimes complimenting, what I've said in LeftOut. Helen didn't reserve her comments for my column, though. I have had the benefit of Helen's unsolicited, unvarnished opinions about my columns, my law practice, my personal relationships, even my haircuts, for the past 16 years.

I didn't always like what Helen said. She could be cutting and brutally honest. She didn't believe in sugarcoating the truth. I didn't always take what Helen said to heart, either. But I always listened and considered it, because Helen had an incredible mind, judgment, and integrity. I would have been a fool to ignore her. Plus, as anyone who knew Helen knows, she would not be ignored.

I remember a night years ago that Helen and I went out to dinner and then to JR's for drinks. A couple of other friends and I said we wanted to go dancing. So we all walked next door to Pacific Street. When we got to the door, the doorman allowed in all of the men but stopped Helen and told her she couldn't go in because she had a purse, and purses weren't allowed. All hell broke loose. Helen ripped the doorman a new one for being a misogynist and ripped me a new one for wanting to go into a bar that discriminated against women. Then she stopped, planted her hands on her hips, and said, "You know what? I haven't been marching and raising hell for queer rights for the past 20 years just so a bunch of nasty, women-hating little queers could discriminate against me." Then she stomped off in a cloud of language that does not bear repeating.

Helen was, of course, right. The no-purse policy was a thinly veiled way of keeping women out. It was offensive, especially to a woman like Helen, who spent her entire life battling discrimination. Helen was an early feminist, who didn't just change laws, but changed attitudes about the role of women in society. And her feminism wasn't selfish. For her, it was not "the woman's movement," it was the "women's movement." Helen wanted to climb to the top, and she wanted other women with her when she got there.

Helen didn't limit her fight for equality to women. She opposed discrimination because, as she said, she understood the principle that "bigotry has one face," and that until everyone was equal under the law, there would be no such thing as equality.

continued on page 22

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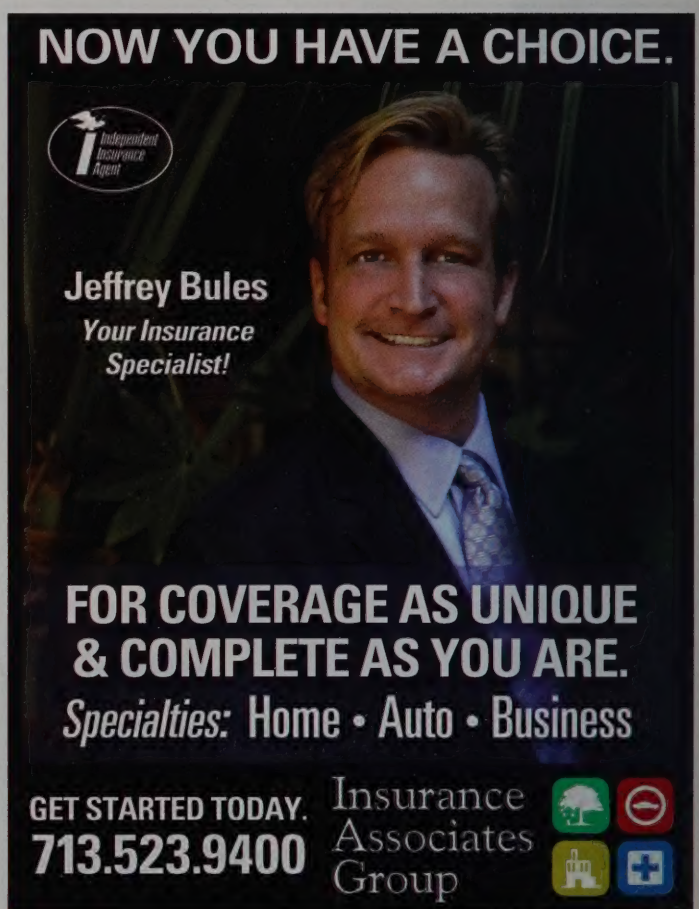

by Dale Carpenter

NO SAFE PLACE

For gay Americans, daily life still offers unexpected hazards

We've made so much progress over the past four decades that it's easy to forget how far we still have to go. You can see that in the marriage fight, where gay relationships are routinely equated with the destruction of civilization. But you can see it more clearly, I think, in day-to-day life.

I live in Minneapolis, one of the most politically liberal places in the country. Minnesota has a statewide law protecting gays from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Minneapolis has three openly gay city council members, the largest proportion of any major city in the country. A Republican couldn't get elected dogcatcher in this town. My employer, the University of Minnesota, offers same-sex domestic partners' benefits to employees.

Not long ago, I briefly dated a guy living in San Francisco. He came to visit me in Minneapolis for a long weekend, during which we did the kinds of things that dating couples do in order to get to know one another better. We went out to eat. We went to the movies. We walked together down the street and in the mall.

He lives in the Castro, and when he dates people he is accustomed to holding hands, kissing, hugging, showing affection in dozens of little ways. He gives no thought to doing these things in public places. Yet when we did these things in public in liberal Minneapolis, the reception we got ranged from cold disapproval to open hostility.

In one of my favorite neighborhood restaurants, while we were waiting in line to order, he hugged me from behind and lingered there a few moments. The wait staff shot us nervous looks, as if they feared we might start sodomizing each other right next to the lamb kebobs. A guy walked by us, singing to his portable CD player, and spelled aloud the word *G-A-Y,* as if it were part of the song.

Driving back from a movie, I put my arm around my date's shoulders. Several other drivers slowed down beside us to take a closer look at my car, a 1959 Chrysler Windsor. When they noticed my arm around my date, their appreciative attitudes changed. The nice ones pointed us out to their friends and laughed, then sped ahead. A couple of carloads of young men were more menacing, throwing paper cups and even empty bottles of beer at my car.

At the zoo, walking down the street, and in the mall, we held hands at several points (always at my date's initiative). Each time we got nasty looks. We would pass people, then I would turn my head and see that they were looking back at us and whispering to each other. A few parents turned their children away from us, as if we were contagious, harmful on sight. →

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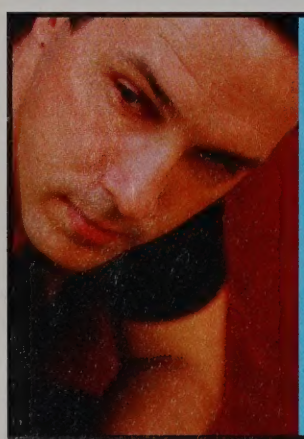

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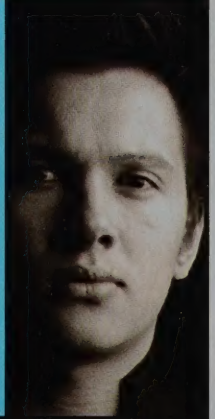

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LeftOut

continued from page 20

Maybe it was that understanding that compelled Helen to be a life-long activist. She marched for civil rights in the '60s, was a founder of the Texas Women's Political Caucus in the '70s, walked with Q-Patrol in the '80s, and addressed the First International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy in the '90s.

For four decades, Helen was at the forefront, often speaking out about issues that made a lot of people, including me, uncomfortable. But Helen forged on. She never quit, no matter who it bothered or who it made uncomfortable.

In November 2004, Helen was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer. She died on June 11. The six months before Helen's death were progressively awful. Nothing worked. Helen got sicker and sicker. Her sharp tongue became soft. Her caustic wit disappeared. She quit watching the news. She wouldn't even listen to Bush speak because she didn't have the energy to respond. In essence, she quit caring about all of the causes that had consumed her adult life. Instead, she started obsessing over how long it had been since she had taken her last pain pill, or why I had written a check for her cable bill rather than pay it online.

Watching Helen Cassidy quit caring was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I had never seen Helen quit at anything, and I wasn't ready when she finally did. I wanted her "to do something about it." Bitch. Kick down a door. Tear the piggy doctor a new one. The fact that Helen couldn't or wouldn't do any of the above was hard to take. I felt helpless. I still do.

So I write this column as an inadequate tribute to a woman who changed the world and my life. I write this column because I'm afraid that if I stop thinking about Helen, she will disappear. And, I write this column because if the Helen Cassidys of the world are forgotten, we will.

Writing from the liberal side, Houston attorney Daryl Moore has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law.

OutRight

continued from previous page

All in all, in the space of a few days, things like this happened more times than I could count. At the end of the weekend, I apologized to him. I was embarrassed. I felt terrible that I brought him out of a place where he could be himself to a place where being himself meant living with a constant sense of low-level danger. There was no way

I could ever ask him to leave San Francisco to come to this place. There being no future, we stopped dating.

Sad as I was about that, I was mostly stunned. Though I knew things weren't perfect here, I had not experienced anything like it in the five years I had lived in Minneapolis. Had these things really happened in my cocoon of tolerance and acceptance, my liberal bastion? Had it been a fluke, an unlucky weekend of chance encounters with the only ignoramuses around?

Then it dawned on me why all this had happened while he was in Minneapolis, but not before. In previous dating relationships, all with men from the area, my dates and I had censored our public conduct in ways that precluded problems. We had engaged in little or no hugging, or hand holding, or other obvious signs of affection in public. We had held back without even realizing it. It was second nature to us.

My San Francisco date, however, hadn't been properly trained. He had initiated each of these shameless, heedless displays, and I had somewhat nervously gone along with them. He felt free in a way I never really have.

What does this atmosphere do to gay people who live outside a few square blocks of freedom in a few big cities? What effect does it have on our chances of forming lasting relationships? When straight couples need a touch of reassurance, they hold hands without a thought. A husband will casually lean over and plant a kiss on his wife. These gestures, mild and routine as they are, help sustain a relationship. Yet for gay couples they are social faux pas, perhaps an invitation to abuse.

The truth is, there's a deep aversion to gay people that will not be eliminated by enlightened laws. It's a gut-level disgust that defies rationalization, that resists education, that fears without thinking. The laws that rule our lives are not written on statute books; they are written on hearts. And the heart of this country, in the heart of this country, is still darker than many of us had hoped it would be by now.

Writing from the conservative side, Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart *in 1994, when he lived in Houston. Now residing in Minneapolis, Carpenter is a University of Minnesota Law School professor.*

INSIDE OUT AT CITY HALL

Annise Parker's column will return in September. During production on this issue, the city controller participated in the John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executives in State and Local Government program at Harvard University. She was one of seven fellows accepted to the program sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute, which promotes the professional development of GLBT public, private, and not-for-profit leaders.

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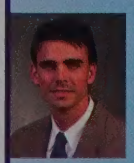

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in tune

We live in a rich music town, and talents from our community are definitely part of the mix. On these pages, we present performers in a range of styles, from classical and show tunes to head-on rock. We also spotlight a local filmmaker who is documenting the scene in Houston.

derek mayo

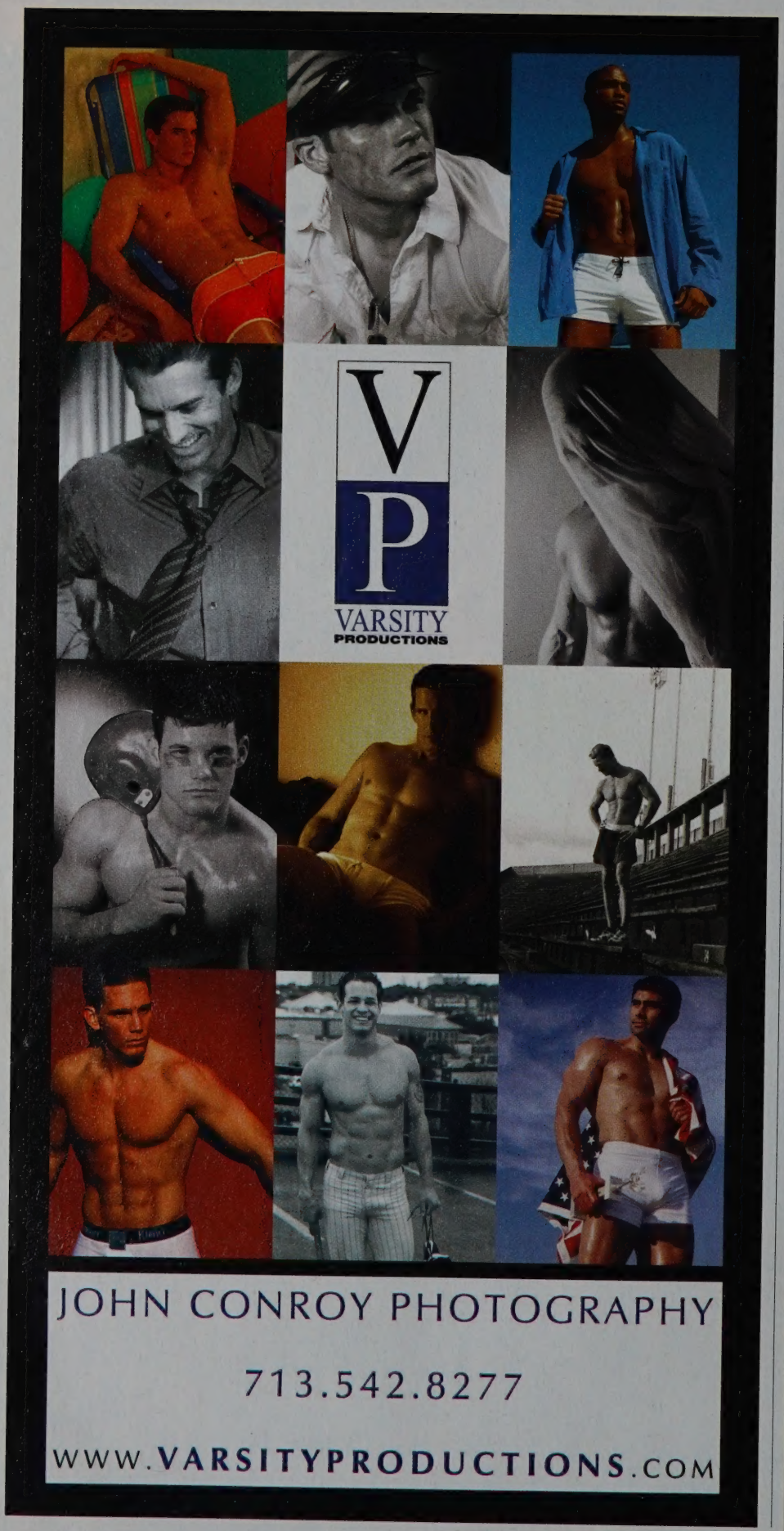
by collin d. mcclure
photo by jill hunter

Aspiring stars are a dime a dozen, but among all those who seek fame and fortune, there may just be one that outshines all the rest. Derek Mayo, or D-Rex as he's known in some circles, is one of those diamonds in the rough. A true bohemian and artist in the most natural sense who believes that love rises above all, Mayo is one of the nicest people you will ever meet as well as one of the most talented. This boy from Newark, New Jersey, is on fire and ready to take over Houston clubs.

Hidden behind the desks and counters of two jobs, including Soundwaves on Montrose, is a singer/songwriter, author, cartoonist, and dancer. His debut record called "Feel It," released at the beginning of June and available only on vinyl right now on the Seasons Recordings label, has been selling out as fast as it hits the shelves. A blend of house and acid jazz, "Feel It" is a sultry track that can currently be heard in clubs and coffeehouses around town.

Collin McClure: What is "Feel It" about?
Derek Mayo: "Feel It" is about →

in houston



Derek Mayo *continued from page 24*

emancipation, you know, with everything I went through from the passing of my dad, failed relationships, things like that. Now I feel like I'm finally coming out of the end of the tunnel. It's like now you're free and starting your life over.

How did you get into the music business?

By accident. I was working at my night job, and Matthew Knowles [Beyoncé's father] came in, and we ended up talking. He asked me, "Why don't you think about getting into music?" I thought, *Why not?* But I've never written a song before. He said if I could write all those [comic book] stories, then I could write songs. And I have a lot of connections through the clubs I used to dance at, and I know a lot of DJs that are producers. That's how I started. I did some cartooning for Dope House Records, and through that I met Mike Frost, who does artwork for many rap artists' CDs. Through that I met DJ Biz, whose roommate helped produce my song along with Matt Bandy, who I loved working with.

"Feel It" is flying off the shelves right now. What can we expect next from Derek Mayo?

I'm working on five songs right now. But while I'm waiting for those songs to be produced, in the meantime I'm working on two books, both comic-book styles. One's called *Promiscuity*. It's a double-entendre. It's a murder mystery about a killer whose name is Promiscuity, and he or she writes the word *promiscuity* on the walls after he/she kills the victims. It's a look at different people's take on infidelity and monogamy. *231 Andorra Lane* will hopefully be out this fall, and it's a campy soap opera, *Dynasty*/*Melrose Place*-like book about artists who all live in the same house.

Your beliefs about relationships show through your music and writing. Do you have time for one, and do you even want one?

I would love more than anything to have love, to get married, to be with that one person and grow old together. That person hasn't come along yet. I want someone who's worth something and is really who they say they are, and who is not only good on the outside, but the same inside. I'm a hopeless romantic.

What would make you the happiest?

Love. That's the main thing.

whitney ann mccray

Singer, songwriter, and guitarist by night, and social worker for people with Alzheimer's by day, Whitney Ann McCray is making a name for herself on the local music scene with her unique fusion of folk and blues music. A new face to Houston, McCray (a native of Amarillo) moved here in December—with her partner, Stephanie—from New Orleans. • While living in the Crescent City, McCray was the primary songwriter for the band The Proud Marys. McCray's time with the band did not go unnoticed. Three of her songs were ranked nationally in the top 500 songs of 2002 and 2003 in the Billboard Songwriter's Competition. McCray is classically trained on the piano, and she says her musical influences are talents like Stevie Wonder and Joni Mitchell. • Success has followed with her move to Houston. McCray was recently a headliner during Pride festivities. She can also be heard playing local bars and pubs including McGonigel's Mucky Duck, Cosmos, Clark's, Undercurrent in Galveston (where she performs on August 12), and Chances (August 13). When not strumming her guitar on stage, or writing songs, McCray spends most of her time with Stephanie remodeling their new home. • McCray, who has recorded three CDs (available at www.whitneyannmccray.com) and is working on material for a new solo album, will be featured at the Houston Women's Festival downtown on September 24.

by michael rowell

photo by john conroy

liviya compean

by josef molnar

photo by yvonne feece

Liviya Compean's music roots extend deep. With a grandfather who played with Dizzy Gillespie and a father and brother who play in her band, it seemed natural for her to pick up the guitar and begin playing from the age of five. • But that's not quite how it happened. • Although she was exposed to music her entire life, Compean never really considered playing and singing professionally until a friend got her an acoustic guitar for her high school graduation. She bought a chord dictionary and applied herself, and in a year was playing in front of open-mic crowds in Austin. • More than 10 years later, Compean and her band (www.liviyacompean.com) have garnered a list of awards and coast-to-coast performances that would put many bands to shame. • "I still haven't grasped the fact that I'm doing this, though," she says. "I really appreciate being able to play music for people." • Compean still has a few goals, however. Even with numerous accolades, she says she still plays, sings, and writes mostly untrained and wants to get professional training so she can become a composer like her grandfather. • But no matter how much she develops, Compean knows she will head in the same direction she has followed her entire life. • "I've always felt music very heavily," she says. "Growing up, my prized possession was my stereo, and as a kid it was not about toys. It was about records."

christian andreason

A near-death experience 10 years ago allowed Cristian Andreason, who has dreamed of having a music career for years, to have a new perspective on his life and the direction his singing would take. He now sees himself and his music as a potential source of inspiration for others. • "I was a powerful personality before," he says, "but I wasn't using it in the right way. After my experience, I discovered that we're all in this together." • Andreason still enjoys and produces pop music, but he focuses on positive messages, instead of the negativity he sees in today's pop music. But Andreason doesn't shy away from confronting the hypocrisy he sees in fundamentalist religion. "Show Me in Red," one of the songs on his latest album, *The Rhythm of Life* (www.allaboutchristian.com), demands that Christians who behave with intolerance and judgment show that Jesus Christ was the source of that ideology. • Andreason is now working on his next recording, and as his music evolves, he says he will still focus on providing positive images for others. • "When I think of inspirational music," he says, "I think of music that can lift you up and make you feel like you can do anything. I want people to feel that when they listen to my songs."

by josef molnar **photo by steven david**

kenneth gayle

by michael rowell

photo by john conroy

hailed not just as a singer but as a "singing actor" by the *Chicago Sun Times*, Kenneth Gayle is someone to look out for on the Houston scene. Recently relocated to Houston from Seattle, Gayle said he made the move because "when I'm not traveling I want here to be home, and the winter isn't as bad either." Gayle now resides in Montrose with his partner, Evan—another strong reason for his transfer, he says. Gayle's personal music tastes are eclectic, ranging from Sammy Davis Jr. to the greats of opera, like Puccini and Mozart. • Not having had a "day job" since 1995, Gayle keeps quite busy. He is one of the three members of the critically acclaimed, nationally touring Three Mo' Tenors ensemble, and has filled in the rest of his time performing with opera companies around the country. On August 26–27, he can be seen in Houston Ebony Opera Guild's production of *La Traviata* at Miller Outdoor Theatre, and on October 7 in his Houston solo concert debut (tickets: 713/524-0199). • Gayle is currently working on his first album, an eclectic mix of opera, jazz, the blues, and contemporary pieces, which he hopes to have available at his concert. He says the motivation for this performance, and all of his music, is that art lets us "communicate and connect on a deeper level. In today's disconnected world, that connection is much needed, and art is just the thing to bridge that gap."

fluff the kat

by josef molnar

photo by yvonne feece

Thursday nights at Chances can be eclectic, with a range of straight and non-straight male and female bands showcasing their talents in an open-mic setting. But at a club where women rule, a lot of the attention is gathered on Fluff the Kat, the house band that welcomes all visitors. • "We love our Thursdays," says Cindy Pruitt, a guitarist and vocalist for the group (center, with Gitiim Chakamoi, Kimberly Jason, Kat Drake, and Tonya Shamblin). "For us we get to hang together and play. It's just a good night. There are not a lot of open-mic nights where you get female musicians. It's nice to have a place where the girls are respected just as much as the guys." • Pruitt says the two-year-old band's evolving mix of straight and gay women has settled down into a group that prides itself on its energy and rock sensibilities. Fluff the Kat (named partly after Drake) covers songs by well-known musicians, but also mixes in originals by its multi-talented members. And while some girl groups gravitate toward lethargic performances, this band (www.fluffthekat.com) knows how to sweat. • "We absolutely have a good time on stage, and I think it rubs off on the crowd," Pruitt says. "I can't imagine life without music. You have to love it if you're going to do it. Otherwise, what's the point?"

shawna baker

When she was about 16, Shawna Baker's access to the Houston music scene consisted of sneaking into clubs to see the latest acts before getting caught. But those 30-minute doses, combined with her later interest in the female bands that developed large local followings, prompted her to question what happened to those bands—and why many of them never gained commercial success. Baker, today an independent filmmaker, decided to research the phenomenon, and is now completing the resulting project, aptly titled *Undiscovered: A Women's Tale*. • The band members Baker interviewed included favorites from the '80s to the present, including XLX, Velvet Hammer, Hype, and Cowboy's Nightmare. She traveled across the country to speak to some of them. The eight bands, all of them more focused on staying true to their music mission than reaching pop stardom, represent the untold stories of many female-dominated bands. • "Just about every one of them have come very close to making it commercially, but just didn't make it to that last step," says Baker (photographed with some of the *Undiscovered* musicians at Chances). "They didn't put on fishnets, high heels, and do what they were told to do, and so they didn't make it." • It is these challenges, which Baker said haven't changed much, that she tries to present to her audience. "People don't stop and think that we're still in a male-dominated industry, and I wanted to show that." • Baker is putting the final touches on her documentary (www.undiscoveredwomen.com), and pre-screened a rough cut last month at Chances. She plans to finish the hour-plus movie after she obtains funding for licensing fees.

by josef molnar

photo by kelly catchings

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BLUES in a

RED State

The president of the revived Stonewall Democrats offers guidance for taking action as the political season, and the vote on the antigay constitutional amendment, looms

by Mark Wood

Photo by Yvonne Feece

There's a buzz people get after Pride season. A nighttime parade, parties, the festival. All of it shows us that we are not alone, that we are surrounded by a community. A look back reminds us too of what we've gained. Housing discrimination is all but gone, HISD and PFLAG have made safe schools more than just a slogan, and we have laws to deal with hate crimes. GLBT-elected officials are now respected and maybe even expected. But we still face second-class status visiting our spouse in the hospital or opening a joint checking account. Partners still struggle with immigration, adoption, and benefits issues.

Meanwhile, big changes are arriving abroad. Look, for instance, at Spain, Canada, and England. This year, GLBT Brits are getting important gains, including inheritance protections for civil partners. GLBT couples will be able to shift an asset like their home from one partner to another tax free, just like straight people. ›

‹ Dem men: Stonewall Democrats president Mark Wood (seated, r) poses at the Hotel Derek with Michael de Medici, director of events and public relations (seated, l); Ron Mock, treasurer (standing, l); and Martin C. Castillo, public relations and events. The Hotel Derek will host an October 6–8 event honoring Houston women and featuring the new movie *In Her Shoes*, with a portion of proceeds benefiting Stonewall Democrats.

DALTON DEHART

Four for Texas: City Controller Annise Parker and City Council candidate Sue Lovell joined Mark Wood (r) and Michael de Medici (l) at a May 29 Stonewall Democrats event at Meteor.

Blues in a Red State

continued from previous page

Back in Texas, this fall we face voters deciding on an antigay marriage amendment to the state constitution. Why, you ask? The far right says it is to protect "the family." But does it really protect anything? We all know that straight people's behavior, not ours, determines their wedded bliss.

While many in our community have grown complacent, living comfortable lives based on past gains, politicians like governor Rick Perry, congressman Tom Delay, and state representative Robert Talton have spread fear by using us as a wedge issue to divide and conquer. Perry recently told a reporter that gay and lesbian veterans who return from Iraq aren't welcome in Texas. (That's gratitude.) Talton sought to prevent GLBT adoption and tried to add to the constitutional amendment a ban on any legal partner contracts conferring benefits that occur in marriage. So much for giving your GLBT spouse your medical power of attorney. (Talton was defeated this time.)

Let's face it: We're under attack, and the choice is yours. Do we sit and complain or do we take action? We deserve better. We have the numbers and we have the tools, but it takes the will to build our base, turn out the vote, and end the abuse.

"What can I do to make a difference?" you ask. In lots of small but important ways, we can each do our part to mobilize voters in the coming elections. And don't worry: You won't break a nail. Just choose the level of involvement that's comfortable to you.

The first step is to join. Our organization, the Stonewall Democrats, offers fun events to meet like-minded people. Some enjoy full-press banquet fundraising. Others prefer a simple mixer and chance to meet the candidates. Still others choose volunteering their time,

HERA Heroes

April Ayers, vice president of the Houston Equal Rights Alliance, introduces the new civil rights player

TIM BROCKOVER

The allies: HERA president Tammi Wallace (l–r), treasurer Jeff Reid, and vice president April Ayers pose at the Houston GLBT Community Center, HERA headquarters.

The Houston Equal Rights Alliance (HERA), a new civil rights organization comprised of volunteers from the former voter identification project Equality Knocks-Houston, announced its official launch in June. Taking up where Equality Knocks left off, HERA is continuing with voter identification while broadening its focus to include alliance building, community mobilization, and driving legislator accountability for their anti-equality votes.

HERA is reaching out to GLBT and straight organizations in an effort to create a long-term alliance that will promote civil rights for all people. Our organization is about building alliances in order to leverage the strength of various organizations, as HERA president →

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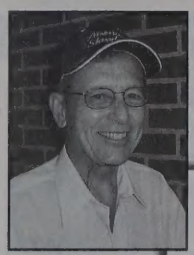

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Blues in a Red State

continued from page 36

calling voters, or bringing signs and campaign info to people's homes. One really great way to help is to throw a small fundraiser at your house for a candidate. The main thing is to join something. The Stonewall Dems, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, and Houston Equal Rights Alliance [see sidebar] are all good places to take meaningful action and find new friends.

The next thing, and it's a huge step, is to learn how to talk. Whether it's with friends, family, or co-workers, we can all triple our votes (at least) if we can learn to talk to people who care about us in a way that effectively appeals to their values and morals on our issues.

This is where framing comes in. Framing is changing the context in which a policy issue is discussed. For example, *pro-life* becomes *pro-choice*. A total shift is achieved in which values are the focus of discussion, or at least new ones are highlighted. For many years now, right-wing ideologues have polished their skills at renaming the issue and thus seizing the moral high ground. As we discussed before, protecting the family sounds good but means nothing. It puts defenders of our rights at an immediate disadvantage as an attacker of a societal sacred cow.

Polls show that people vote with their gut based on their value system. It may seem illogical, but the evidence is clear, as University of California Berkeley professor and political writer George Lakoff says, "Overwhelming facts and statistics, debate victories, and proffered new policies did not translate into enough votes. . . . The facts alone won't set us free. People make decisions about politics and candidates based on their value system, and the language and frames that invoke those values."

As our opponents became skilled at framing, even our allies were using language invented by the conservatives. If we are to be persuasive, "We must present a clear moral vision," as Lakoff's writes. We must offer a positive message of opportunity, mutual responsibility, and tolerance: uniting values, American values laid down by the original framers of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

I'm no expert. We all struggle with the words. But let me suggest you buy and read Lakoff's book, a *New York Times* best seller called *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate —The Essential Guide for Progressives* (Chelsea Green Publishing). Lakoff presents the nuts and bolts of how to talk to your mom, defend us on talk radio, or join a discussion in the break-room at work. He turns years of research into a very readable field guide to "re-claiming the language that evokes values strong enough to get people to go to the polls."

So, if you're tired of being a political piñata for the other guys, step up and start taking action. The choice is yours.

Mark Wood is president of Stonewall Democrats Houston.

HERA Heroes

continued from page 36

Tammi Wallace says. Through HERA, we are creating a framework to develop strategy well beyond November. We are reaching out to potential alliance partners in an effort to build a comprehensive group of organizations that are willing to work together over the long-term." Current alliance partners include the Foundation for Marriage Equality, Houston GLBT Political Caucus, Houston GLBT Community Center, Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, and the new No Nonsense in November campaign (see page 14).

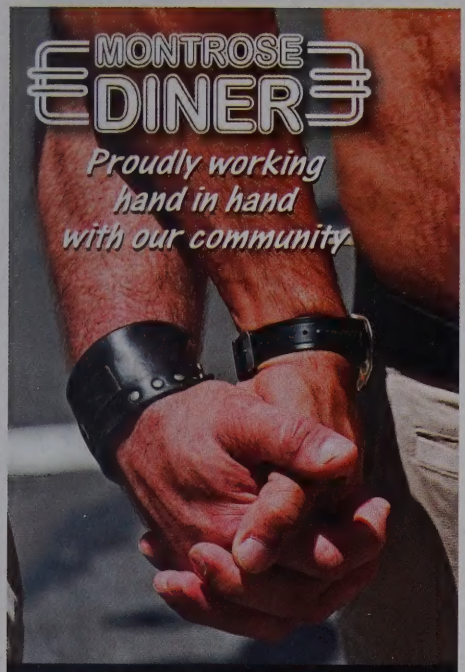
Center of attention: City Controller Annise Parker (c) was the guest at the June 21 Houston Equal Rights Alliance kick-off reception at Meteor.

Voter identification and community mobilization play a huge role in our strategy. We are currently working to defeat the discriminatory marriage amendment that will be presented to voters this November. This is the largest Houston coalition and grassroots campaign of its kind. We will not assume that this is a lost battle. We will not stand by and let discrimination be written into the one document that was written to grant rights to all Texans.

Volunteers will be conversing with voters one-on-one during the block walks, phone banks, and pledge-card drives occurring throughout the summer and fall (check www.houstonera.org for details). The intent of these actions are to educate voters about the lack of legal protections available to gay and lesbian couples and their families while building on the current base of supporters.

We believe that building a base of voters who believe in equality for all will be essential to holding legislators accountable for their voting record. The list of legislators whose votes have fallen on the side of anti-equality legislation includes Martha Wong, whose district covers half of Montrose. Working with our alliance partners, we are building on a current database of 45,000 supporters who support civil rights for all Texans including LGBT individuals and their families. HERA is working with alliance partners to identify opportunities to mobilize these individuals in an effort to hold legislators accountable as well as asking supporters to vote no on the amendment in November.

This fight is definitively about more than GLBT issues. Right now we're fighting this amendment. Right now, the rights of the GLBT community are being targeted. It's us now, but what's to say which group will be targeted next? ■



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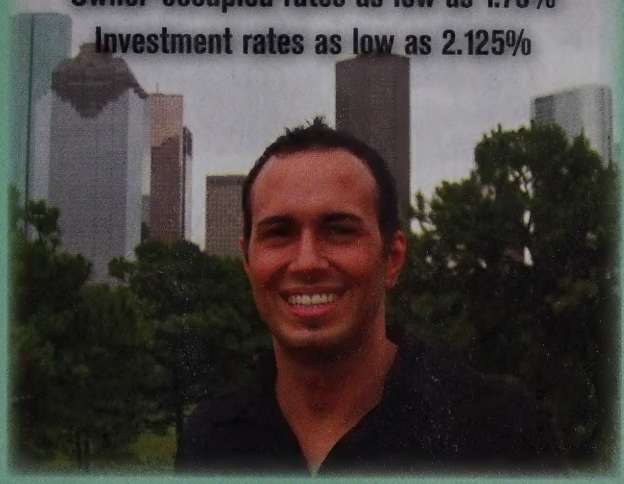

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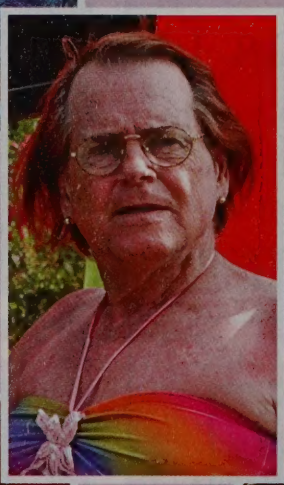
ON THE ROAD

Pride rolled down Westheimer in all its queer glory

Photos by Dalton DeHart

With the exuberantly political slogan of "Equal Rights! No More! No Less!," the 2005 GLBT Pride Parade took over lower Westheimer on June 25. Mayor Bill White led a contingent of local political figures, who included City Controller Annise Parker, congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, four state representatives and four City Council members. The 129 entries ranged from community activist organizations to social groups, many adorned with lights for the nighttime parade (see www.outsmartmagazine.com for a list of trophied entries). For the first time, the event was broadcast live by the Q Television Network, beaming the Houston celebration into thousands of queer homes.



SOUNDS OF PRIDE
Before the parade kicked off, the Pride music festival rocked Montrose

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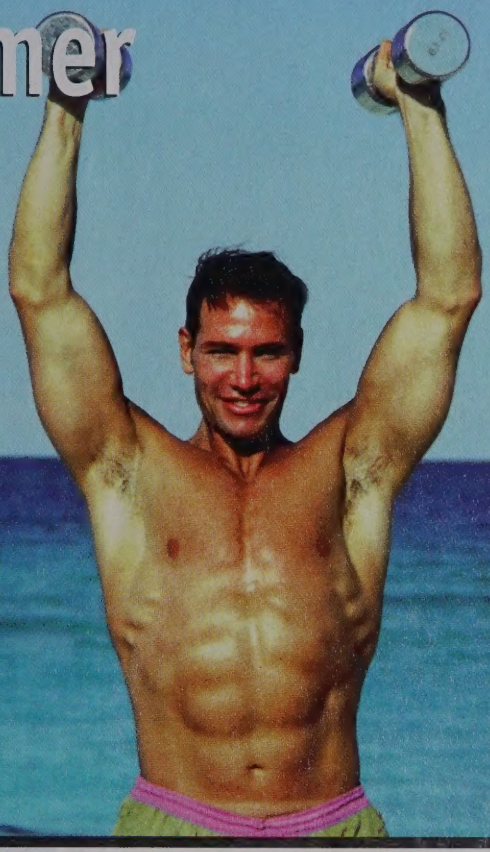

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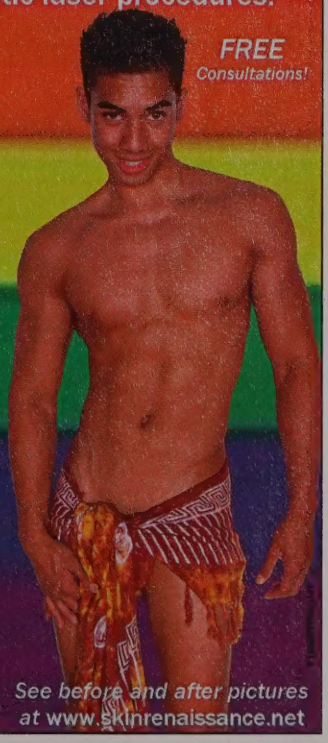

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On the Road

continued from page 40

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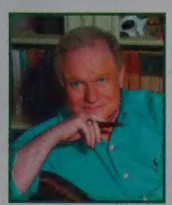

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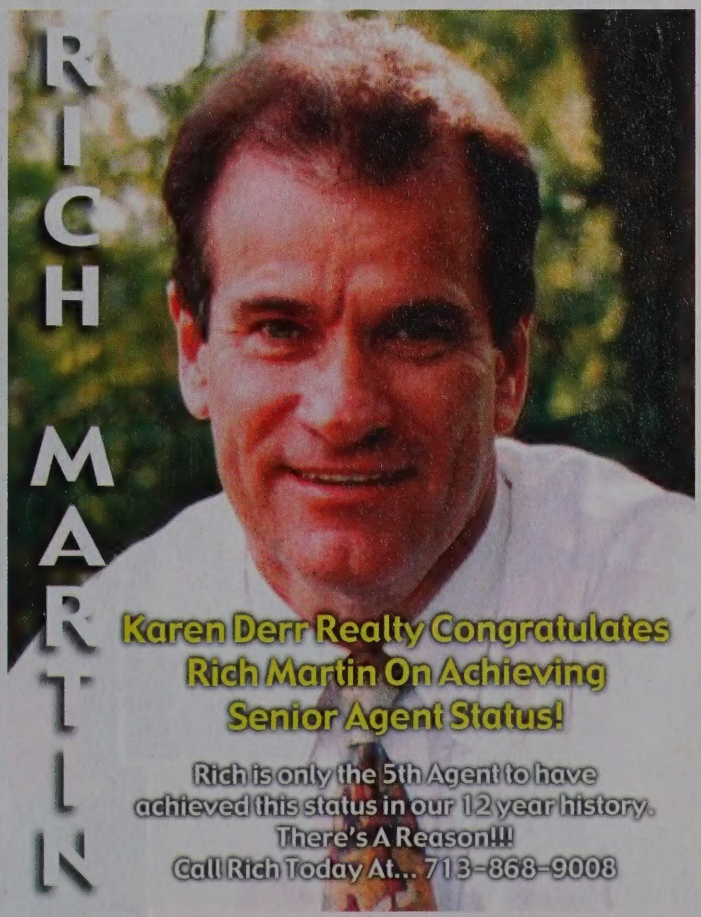

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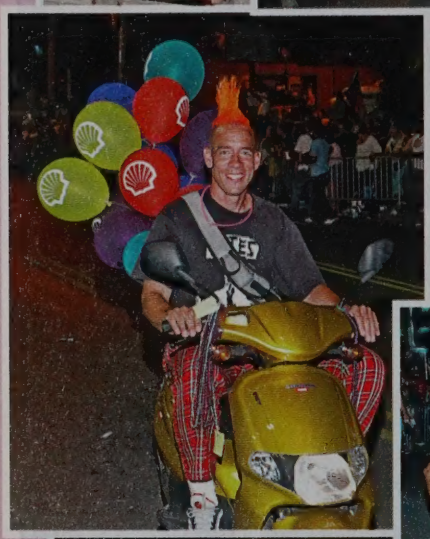

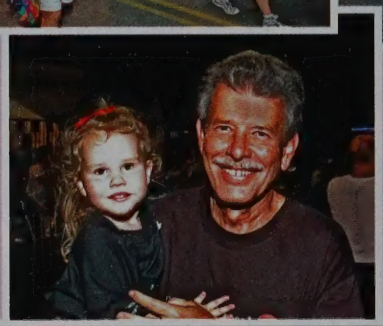

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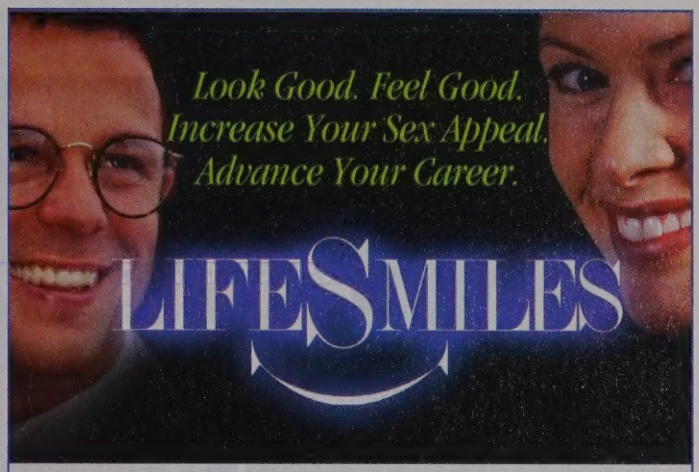

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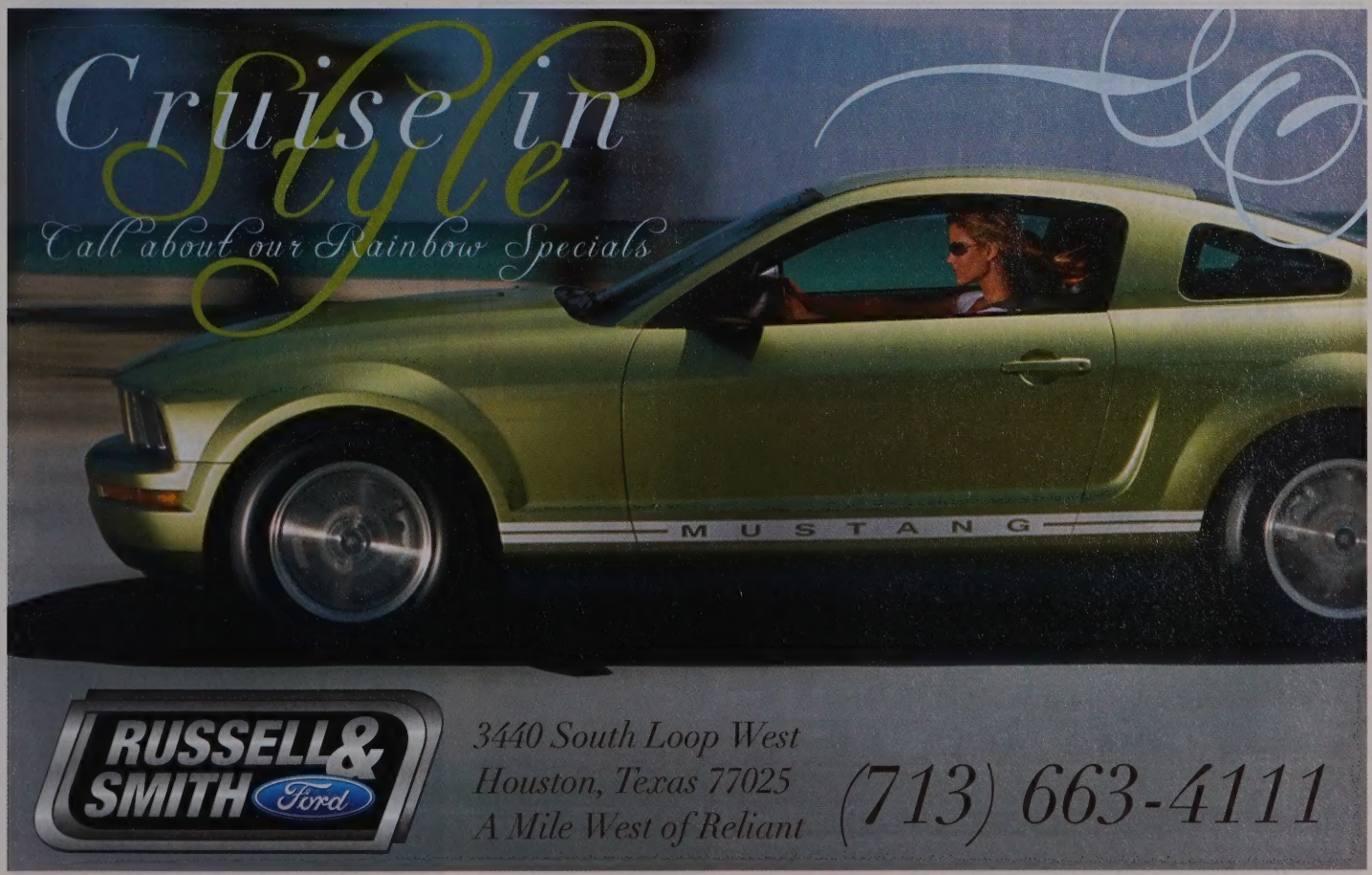

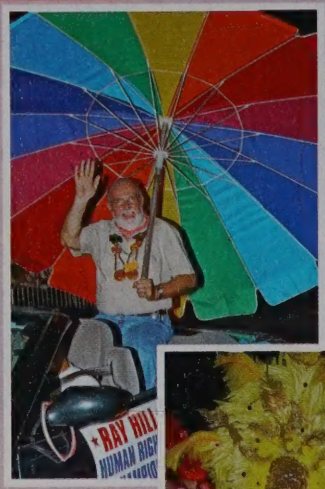

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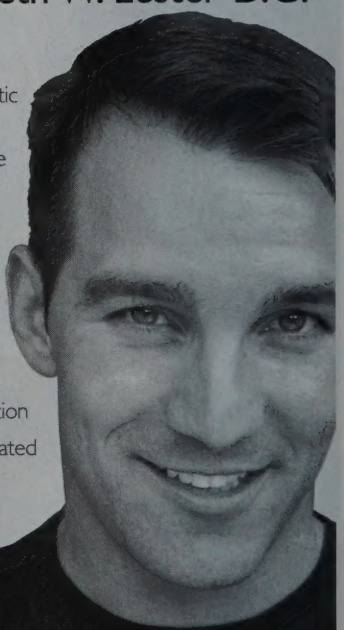

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New Look for an Old Friend

Family room: A large-screen television and cozy seating focus the new living room, above, designed by Donna Vining, FASID, and the ASID Art Institute of Houston chapter. Inset, left: The living room, before.

A design team rejuvenates the Omega House hospice

by Tim Brookover
Photographs by Rex Spencer

Ten years ago, the American Society of Interior Designers-Texas Gulf Coast Chapter spruced up Omega House, the hospice for people with terminal-stage AIDS. After a decade, the well-loved home had grown a little dowdy, and Bering Omega Community Services (which now operates the Montrose residential facility founded by Eleanor Munger) again turned to the local ASID chapter for help.

The designers, along with instructors and more than 100 students from the Art Institute of Houston, completed the rejuvenation in February. Designers included John Robinson and Rex Spencer, who also took the photographs that appear on these pages. The project (directed by co-chairs Diane Alexander, Joan Portman, and Margaret Simmons) addressed every room in the 5,000-square-foot Arts & Crafts-style house and included everything from structural improvements to paint and fabrics. With its wonderful new look, Omega House now offers a home imbued with even more comfort and grace for its residents and their families and friends. →

At home in Montrose: The Omega House hospice.

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 continued from page 48

A room of one's own: Three of the Omega House bedrooms were designed by (clockwise from top left) Mary Wilson, ASID, John Robinson, FASID, and Suzanne Duin, ASID. The Wilson bedroom features an aquarium in the storage unit.

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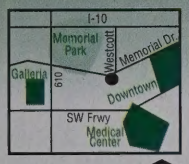

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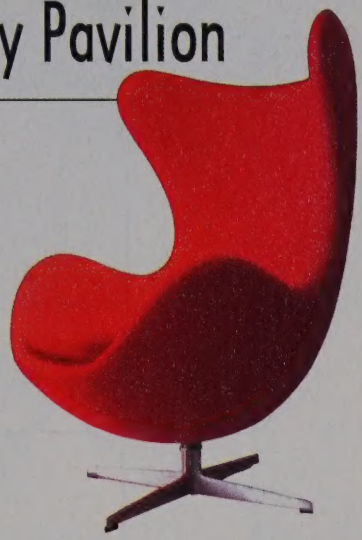

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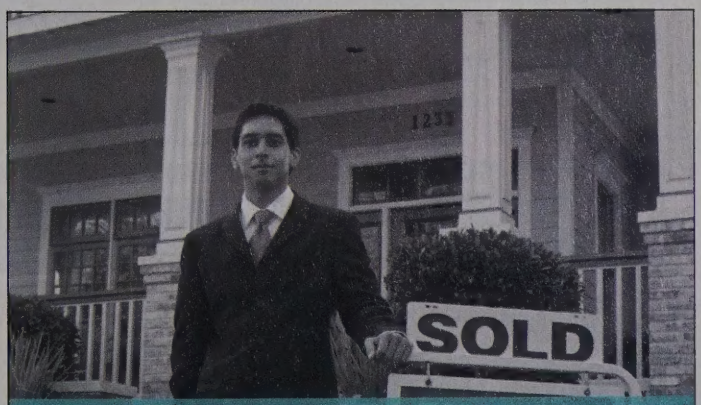

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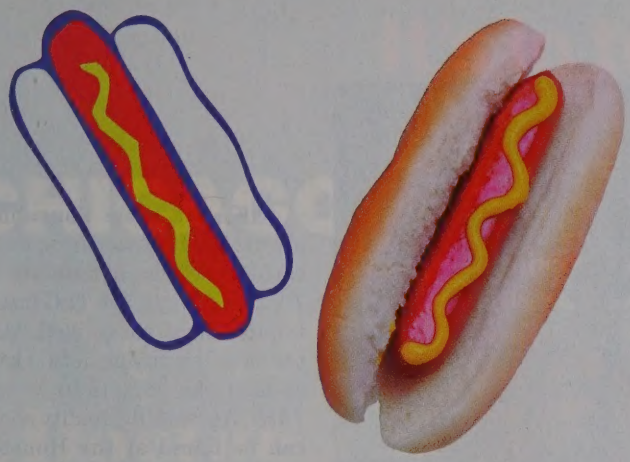
 continued from page 50

Tile the way: Rex Spencer of the Art Institute of Houston designed the new tub room (he also took these photographs). Inset, above: The tub room, before.

Enter, smiling: A photograph of Omega House founder Eleanor Munger watches over the entry designed by Charlene Dwyer, ASID, and Mary Ann Bryan, FASID. ■



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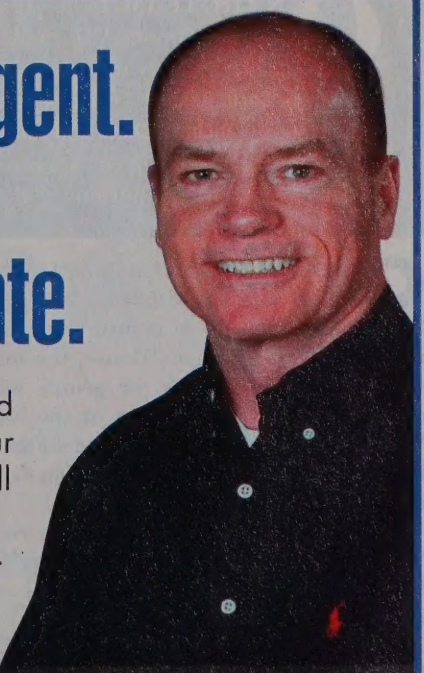

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by Tim Brookover

STEVEN DAVID

ON THE TEAM. In less than a year, Team Houston athletes will travel to Chicago for Gay Games VII. Some will choose Montreal for the first World Out Games. Jocks already in training include (front row, l–r) **Marc Betters**, tennis; **David Fagan**, physique; **Carlo Deason**, track; (back row, l–r) **Keith Wright**, cycling; **Butch Compton** and **Roger French**, rugby; **Richard Chew** and **Jettie Pugh**, billiards; and **David** and **Tony**, softball (*OutSmart* agreed not to publish their last names at their request). See www.outsmartmagazine.com for the local team affiliations of these athletes.

GOOD WORKS. On June 18, **Chris Baudier** and **Ginger Vitis** hosted "It's a Family Affair," a Pride month show that raised funds for Lazarus House, the marvelous wellness facility for people with chronic illnesses. Performers at the Keys West show presented by Third Coast Family included **Marc Cohen**, **Alton Howard**, **Amy Waltz**, and **Tess Tamir**.

Third Coast Family struts into Keys West on August 20 with the "Dance Floor Divas and Disco Queens" show. Proceeds benefit The Assistance Fund.

Don Gill presents his annual LIVE birthday show on August 21 at Brazos River Bottom. **Lisa Foronda** of KHOU is emcee, and **Shawn Thomas** performs. Money raised helps the Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church AIDS Benevolence Fund.

Leesa NewHouse (a.k.a. **Justin Brown**) captured the Miss Bowler Beehive title at an April 2 event at JR's. Funds from the Beehive show benefited Montrose Clinic and Montrose Counseling Center. Not familiar with Miss Bowler Beehive? Brown explains that the title represents the five local GLBT bowling leagues, which hosts a big tournament each July 4 weekend. The bowlers raise money for selected charities, which for 2005 are Texas Children's Hospital, Montrose Clinic, Montrose Counseling Center, and Houston Pet Placement League.

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Fresh from his tribute roast on June 12, **Ray Hill** travels to Baltimore August 6–11 to cover the American Corrections Association conference in his role as journalist and host of the remarkable *Prison Show* on KPFT.

At her House of Finesse, **Deidre Sam** ("OutFront," July *OutSmart*) hosts after-game parties following Houston Comets games on August 14 and August 27.

OK, our little household always enjoyed watching dishy carpenter **Carter Oosterhouse** on *Trading Spaces*, the TLC home-improvement show. Well, Oosterhouse (switching networks to co-host the sure-to-be-weepy *Three Wishes* NBC reality show) can be found at the Houston Home Show at the George R. Brown Convention Center on August 20. Stop by the American Lung Association Health House exhibit at either 11 a.m. or 4 p.m. You're welcome.

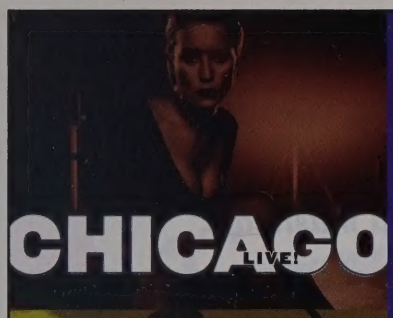
Need more help on the home front? The American Society of Interior Designers/Texas Gulf Coast Chapter presents its Interiors Bazaar, August 26–28, at Reliant Center as part of the Houston Home & Interior Design Show. At this annual event, the designers offer antiques, home furnishings, and other treasures at reduced prices. The bazaar includes an "Ask the Designer" booth, where an ASID professional offers free 15-minute sessions.

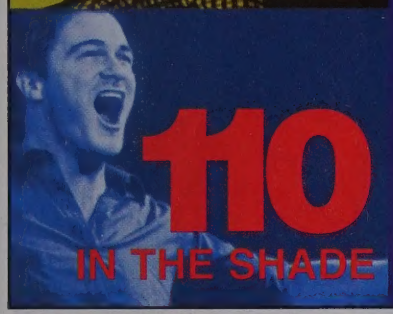
The M.D. Anderson Cancer Center GLBT Network monthly mixer takes place at Meteor on August 19, communications chair **Glenda Redworth** reports.

On August 21, philanthropist **John Kellett** (profiled in our June issue) is the guest at the quarterly Sunday History Series presented by the Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History and the Houston GLBT Community Center. **Jim Carper** will interview Kellett at the center. The museum will tape the conversation, to air later on the Houston MediaSource channel.

ON THE ISLAND. COPA Productions' **Allen Cole** and **Angelique Andrea** (a.k.a. **Charlie Pacheo**) are prepping for their first Miss Gay Islander Pageant on September 3 at Undercurrent. Proceeds will benefit AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas.

On June 4, glamorous **Misty Valdez** raised money for AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas and Jesse Tree at her 18th annual benefit at Garza's Kon Tiki. Mainlander diva **Kofi** traveled to Galveston to emcee. ■





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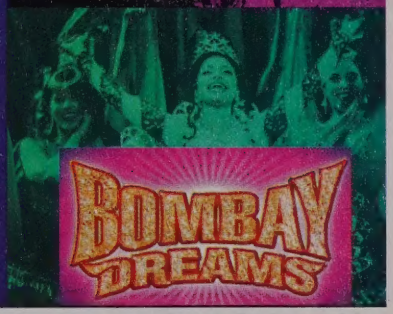

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by Tim Brookover

PICK UP ARTIST

At Chances, a Houston movie premiere features a local musician

On August 28, Chances presents the Houston premiere of the independent lesbian flick *How to Pick Up Girls: A Guide for the Dating Impaired.* The soundtrack for this rom-com (from Austin-bred Passion Fruit Video) features "Figure It Out," a smoky rocker by local talent Cindy Pruitt as well as music by Dallas-based Astrogin and Rachael Sage. The screening starts at 7 p.m. Read more about Pruitt and the band Fluff the Kat in our coverage of local GLBT musical stars that begins on page 24.

By the way, the uni-name *Girls* director, Alpha, reveals that the next Passion Fruit film, *The Chronicles of Halcyon: Pleasure Dome,* debuts at the Austin Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival (September 30–October 8). "It's a very fun spoof of Xena and Monty Python with a lesbian twist," she says.

ALL PHOTOS - PASSION FRUIT VIDEO

How To guide: Alpha of the Austin-based Passion Fruit Videos directed *How to Pick Up Girls: A Guide for the Dating Impaired,* which receives its Houston premiere on August 28 at Chances. INSET: Kathryn MacGregor (l) and Bryher Grey, two of the film's lesbian and bisexual cast, and the movie poster. The next Passion Fruit film is *The Chronicles of Halcyon: Pleasure Dome,* debuting next month.

PERFECT 10 x 10

Joe Watts, a theatrical treasure in our community ("Not Just a Stage," March *OutSmart*), is on board for 10 x 10, the 15th annual Country Playhouse program for which 10 directors helm 10-minute plays. Watts directs two shorts with gay themes. He wrote one, *Lost Redemption.* The other is *Father's Day,* by Theresa Laws. Performances are 8 p.m. August 12, 13, 19, and 20 and 5 p.m. August 14. For reservations, call 713/467-4497.

Next month, Watts revives his production of *Bent* at Holocaust Museum Houston, which he presented last summer in a sold-out run ("OutFront," August *OutSmart*). The drama about gay men in the Third Reich will open September 15 for five performances only. For reservations, call 713/522-2204. ■

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Joel Osteen (pastor, Houston's Lakewood Church)

(*Larry King Live*, CNN, 6/20/05)

Larry King: How about issues that the church has feelings about? Abortion? Same-sex marriages?

Joel Osteen: Yeah. You know what, Larry? I don't go there. I just . . .

You have thoughts, though.

I have thoughts. I just, you know, I don't think that a same-sex marriage is the way God intended it to be. I don't think abortion is the best. I think there are other, you know, a better way to live your life. But I'm not going to condemn those people. I tell them all the time our church is open for everybody.

You don't call them sinners?

I don't.

Is that a word you don't use?

I don't use it. I never thought about it. But I probably don't. But most people already know what they're doing wrong. When I get them to church, I want to tell them that you can change. There can be a difference in your life. So I don't go down the road of condemning.

Lynda Carter

(*Out*, 7/05, Jeffrey Epstein)

As a young actress, Carter says she looked up to Bette Midler, whom she calls, "My icon, my hero. She got her start in bathhouses, and I thought, I will have really arrived if I can have the gay and lesbian community behind me. I thought that was the ultimate." Ironically, the Arizona native had no idea how much gays and lesbians loved *Wonder Woman*. "I didn't even know until 10 or 12 years ago that I had arrived!" she cracks.

Kristin Chenoweth

(*Out*, 7/05, Michael Musto)

Re: her role opposite Annette Bening in Running With Scissors. "She made me feel comfortable from the get-go. It wasn't anything graphic, just kissing and stuff, but kissing is the most intimate thing. I'm an emotional person. I love the art of kissing. Annette was fun and had great breasts."

10 Years Ago This Month

Boy George

(*Details*, 8/05, Gavin Edwards)

Gavin Edwards: Could you be the most beautiful girl in the world?

Boy George: I have been occasionally, thanks to tungsten and maquillage. But I'm actually less feminine than I thought. In therapy I realized I was a complete chauvinist pig.

Are you lonesome tonight?

No, I'm looking forward to going to bed quite soon and having gorgeous sex. Hopefully he's in the mood. . . .

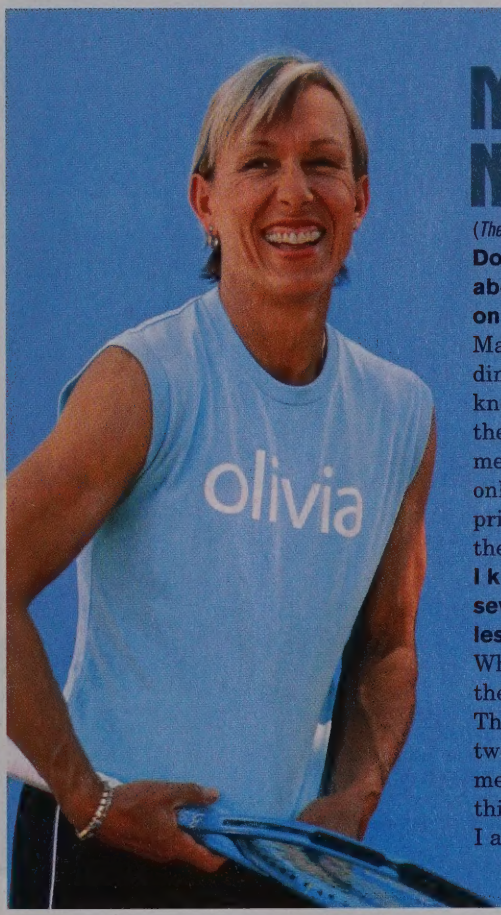
Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Jason Ritter

(*Out*, 7/05, Jeffrey Epstein)

"One of my dad's [John Ritter] best friend's from college was gay," recalls Jason. "I remember, I must have been like 5, and my friends and I had learned Truth or Dare. So we were all sitting around with my mom, my dad, and his friend, and the big 'truth' question was 'What girl do you like in this room?' And I asked him that, and he said, 'None of them.' Later my dad took me aside and said, 'Some boys fall in love with girls. And some boys fall in love with boys. And some girls fall in love with girls. And that's what it is.'" As for the young actor, he's in love with a girl. . . .



Martina Navratilova

(*The Out Traveler*, Jul/Aug/05, Douglas Robson)

Douglas Robson: What's unusual about traveling with so many women on tour around the world?

Martina Navratilova: When you go to dinner and it's all women, they don't know who to bring the check to, or they don't know who to bring the menu to at a fancy restaurant where only the man gets the menu with the prices on it. They get very confused then. . . .

I know you have had a partner for several years. Has traveling as a lesbian couple changed?

When you ask for a queen-size bed they don't look at you funny anymore. They used to always try to give you two beds. I know couples that would mess up the other bed to make people think they had slept in different beds. I always thought, *Who cares?*

Clockwise from top left: Jason Ritter in the recent film *Happy Endings*, directed by openly gay Don Roos; Martina Navratilova in a publicity shot from Olivia Cruises; and Lady Bunny tops it all with a top-heavy hat.

One Year Ago This Month

Lady Bunny

(*New York Post*, 8/04, Paula Froelich and Chris Wilson)

Drag diva Lady Bunny has invited New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey to make his drag debut at today's Wigstock festival. "Now that he's come out of the closet, maybe there's a wig and a pair of heels in there, too."

(Editor's note: Wigstock Festival celebrates its 20th anniversary this month. The legendary drag fest will once again rock its original '80s location in New York's East Village's Tompkins Square Park, on Saturday, August 27. All acts will be curated and emceed by Wigstock founder Lady Bunny who notes, "Twenty years! I'm 26 now, so I must have started organizing the festival when I was six years old!" [And she's been using that line since 1992!] For more info: www.wigstock.nu and www.ladybunny.net.)

RITTER - ERIC LEE; NAVRATILOVA - OLIVIA CRUISES; BUNNY - JIMMYRSMITH.COM

EAT DRINK MAN WOMAN MAN

Restaurants don't play a big part in Eating Out

Caleb (Scott Lunsford) is a hunky poli-sci major with an affection for aggressive girls. Gwen (Emily Stiles) is an aggressive girl who falls for gay-acting boys. It's a match made in therapy.

In a plan hatched by his crafty gay roommate Kyle (Jim Verraros), Caleb finds himself pretending to be gay to woo Gwen, but their scheme is thwarted when Gwen decides that Caleb would be the perfect catch for her own gay roommate, Marc (Ryan Carnes)—the object of Kyle's affection.

Director Allan Brocka says, "The idea for *Eating Out* began as sort of a joke. While in a screenwriting class at California Institute of the Arts, I was required to write one feature-length screenplay every semester. I was tapped out of high concept and emotionally wrenching ideas so, to amuse myself, I wrote intense gay sex scenes [that] the cute straight guys [had to] read out loud in class. . . . Before I knew it, *Eating Out* was born.

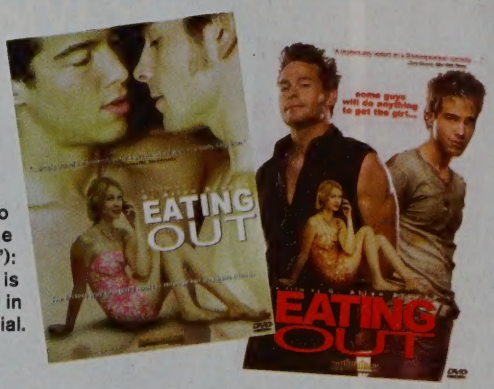
"*Eating Out* is a story close to my heart. It's the college-popcorn-fluff comedy I always eagerly consumed, but never saw myself represented in. . . . Above all, it's another voice shouting out that queer youth have the same awkward, mushy, horny, romantic, lonely, funny, crazy, f--ked-up friendships, fantasies, and romances as anyone else."

Eating Out, Brocka's debut feature film, has been accepted into more than 50 film festivals worldwide.

From Ariztical Entertainment (www.ariztical.com). For more info: www.gayhomes.net/rickandsteve/eatingout.

—Troy Carrington

▲ Director Allan Brocka (bottom) with his cast (l–r): Rebekah Kochan, Emily Stiles, Ryan Carnes, Scott Lunsford, and Jim Verraros.



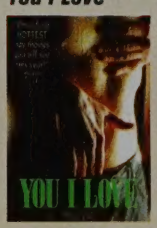
➤ The DVD has two versions of the cover (one "gay" and one "straight"): If you can't guess which is which, you're probably in some kind of denial.

DVD/VHS PREVIEWS

Maestro

Maestro, a feature-film documentary by Josell Ramos, explores the roots of the underground dance music culture spanning the late '60s to the early '80s. The film provides an extensive, unique, and compelling glimpse into a musical and cultural phenomenon that set the groundwork for the global club and DJ culture. • *Maestro* focuses on legendary underground clubs such as The Loft and the Paradise Garage, whose elements influenced parties around the world. In-depth interviews with renowned DJs and ordinary clubgoers, never-before-seen original footage, and a look at the most seminal figures of the era reflects the underground scene currently being rediscovered. • The *Maestro* soundtrack is a compilation from the original motion picture and features tracks that have never before been released on CD. • 2003. The two-disc DVD and the soundtrack CD are available from Sanctuary Records (www.sanctuaryrecords.com). *—TC*

You I Love



A breezy comedy of manners, set in Moscow, about three people from very different walks of life: a female news anchor, a male ad executive, and a young man who works in the zoo. These three form an uncommon relationship as friends and lovers, upending tradition and responding to the unpredictability of life in modern Russia. • This examination of modern-day sexual attitudes also shows a Russia seldom seen in movies: reeling under the sugar-high of capitalistic excess, with fissures constantly forming in social and sexual categories. *You I Love* offers humor, romance, and winning performances. • 2004. Directed by Olga Stolpovskaya and Dmitry Troitsky. Russian with English subtitles. • From Picture This! Entertainment (www.picturethisent.com). *—TC*

Clara's Summer

Clara and her best friend Zoé head to camp for a summer of adventure and self-discovery. Both virgins, Zoé views camp as her chance to lose her virginity, while Clara doesn't yet feel ready for romance. Among those they encounter at camp are the shallow Sébastien, a fellow camp member; a male camp counselor; and the beautiful lesbian, Sonia. • *Clara's Summer* captures the curiosity, bravado, and often hurtful dynamics of teens. With all the drama, lust, cruelty, and manipulation that are a part of adolescence, *Clara's Summer* takes you on an unforgettable journey through teenage torment, with the courage and discovery embodied by this tender but confusing age. • 2002. Directed by Patrick Grandperret. French with English subtitles. • From Picture This! Entertainment (www.picturethisent.com). *—Suzie Lynde*

Beauty Shop

In *Beauty Shop*, Queen Latifah heads an ensemble cast which includes Alicia Silverstone, Andie McDowell, Alfre Woodard, Mena Suvari, and Djimon Hounsou. Kevin

Bacon plays Jorge, the swishy and egotistical boss who pushes Gina (Latifah) a hair too far, which causes her to leave and open a beauty shop of her own. Inheriting an opinionated group of stylists, a colorful clientele, and a sexy upstairs neighbor, Gina proves that you can't keep a good woman down—and you can't keep a shopful of outrageous women from speaking their minds. If you're concerned about political correctness, you might want to avoid it: Bacon's character is a gay stereotype (*and* negative), and when a new guy (Bryce Wilson) is hired, he is thought to be gay because he "appears" to be gay. • 2005. Directed by Bill Woodruff. • From MGM Home Entertainment (www.mgm.com/dvd). —*SL*

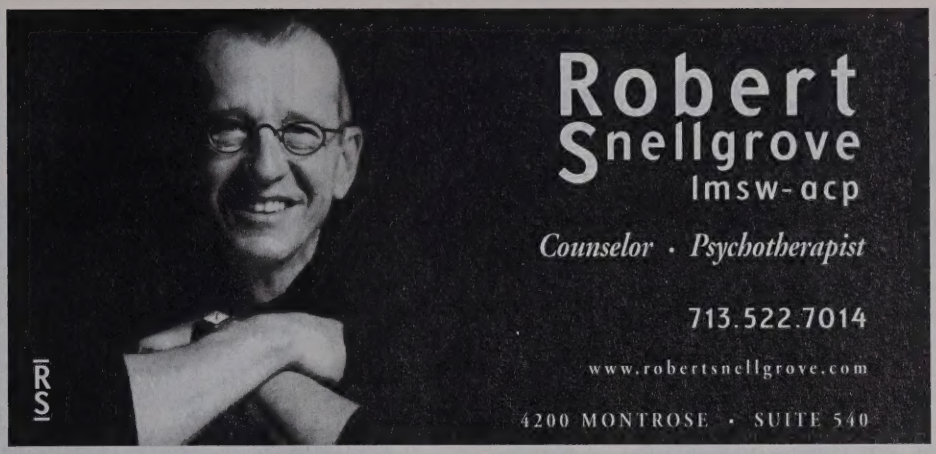
Little Britain: The Complete First Series

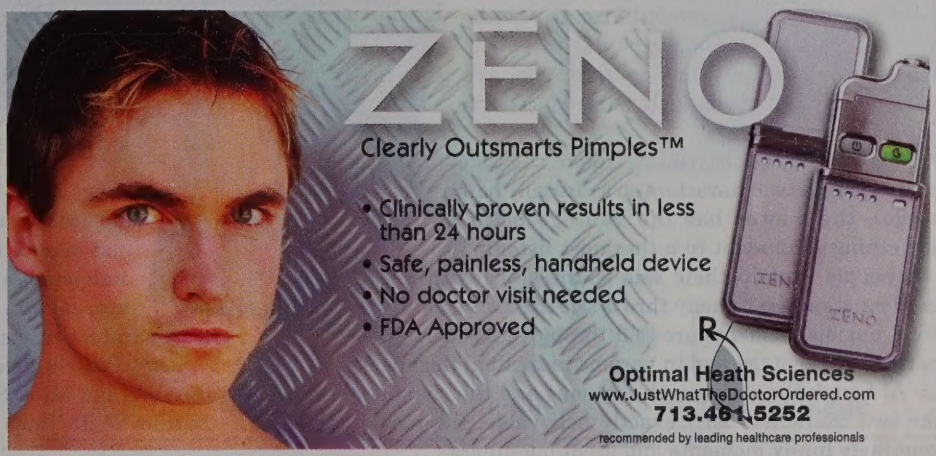
Check your political correctness at the door as BBC Video unleashes *Little Britain: The Complete First Series.* Little Britain is a small and surreal parallel universe peopled by over-the-top eccentrics, lunatics, and social misfits. You'll meet Vicky Pollard, the gloriously incoherent trailer-trash teenager, and Emily Howard, the world's least convincing transvestite. Then there's Andy, sitting all day in his wheelchair, painstakingly looked after by Lou, who has no idea his friend can walk. And we mustn't forget Dafydd Thomas—he's gay: the only gay person in Little Britain, and he doesn't appreciate it when another sissy sashays into town. *Little Britain* presents the breathtaking debris of modern life—all the mad, bad, quirky, and generally crazy people who populate the fringe of British society. • 2003. Available August 16 from BBC Video (www.bbcamericashop.com). Tune in to BBC America on August 17 when it launches *Little Britain*'s second series. —*TC*

Monster-in-Law

After years of looking for Mr. Right, Charlotte "Charlie" Cantilini (Jennifer Lopez) finds the man of her dreams (Michael Vartan), only to discover that his mother, Viola (Jane Fonda), is the woman of her nightmares. A recently fired national news personality who fears losing her son, Viola determines to scare off her son's new fiancée by becoming the world's worst mother-in-law. While Viola's longtime assistant, Ruby (Wanda Sykes) does her best to help Viola execute her schemes, Charlie's gay neighbor and best friend, Remy (Adam Scott), offers advice to Charlie. The two women battle it out in a film whose overall sensibility has frequently been called "campy." • 2005. Directed by Robert Luketic. • The two-disc set will be available August 30 from New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com). For more info: www.monsterinlaw.com. —*SL*

More DVDs →





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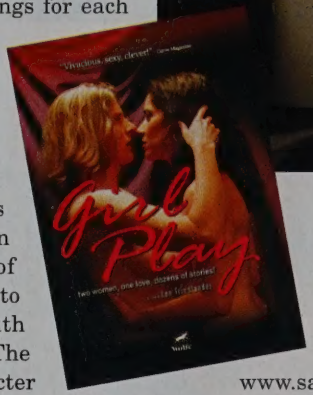
PLAY IT AGAIN, M'AM

***The stage is set for the DVD release of* Girl Play**

The movie *Girl Play* isn't exactly what you might expect. The movie is literally about two women (Robin Greenspan and Lacie Harmon) asked to star in a play about a woman who cheats on her girlfriend with a man. The story the moviegoer sees is about what happens while these two women are becoming more acquainted for the play. Essentially, while they're learning their lines and roles for the play, they're learning they also have feelings for each other. In the end the somewhat original story line becomes a lesbian romantic comedy (with a little drama . . . lesbian style) in which stereotypes from the community are immediately and humorously reintroduced into our consciousness.



With the stage set (most of the movie takes place with the two characters on a virtually baron stage), the viewer has the vantage point of something equivalent to a therapist listening to two people explain their side of the story with random stand-up comedy thrown in the mix. The true comedic moments are told through character narrations off stage and in various individual flashbacks.

Although the acting isn't fabulous and the chemistry between the two characters isn't exactly believable, the movie has some genuinely funny moments and great one-liners.

Robin Greenspan (l) and Lacie Harmon in *Girl Play*.

On a side note, the viewer also gets a taste of some new and fresh music by singer/songwriter Sara Bareilles who just signed a deal with Epic records. Although her first independent CD *Careful Confessions* isn't available in stores, you can sample and buy it on her website at www.sarabmusic.com.

Girl Play is directed by Lee Friedlander and co-stars Dom DeLuise and Mink Stole (see interviews below). Available August 16 from Wolfe Video (www.wolfevideo.com or 1-800-GET-WOLFE).

—Laura Springel

The character played by Mink Stole (l) is shocked when her daughter (Robin Greenspan) comes out to her.

Dom DeLuise (r) as Gabriel is a bit weary of his doting assistant (Dominic Otterersbach).

MINK STOLE & DOM DELUISE IN *GIRL PLAY*

***The John Waters regular and the Mel Brooks regular talk to* OutSmart**

by Blase DiStefano

Blase DiStefano: When and how did you come up with the name Mink Stole?

My real name is Nancy Stoll, and I never really cared for it. So when we made *Roman Candles*, I asked John [Waters] to give me another name and he came up with Mink Stole. Now I don't know how not to be Mink. It is sort of like being called "Paper Plate" or "Dixie Cup." It is a joke.

I'm so used to it, it's not funny.

You'd be surprised how many times people think I'm a drag queen. Just a →

Blase DiStefano: I want to ask you about the wonderful Anne Bancroft [who died June 8, was married to Mel Brooks, and directed and co-starred with DeLuise in *Fatso*].

Dom DeLuise: She was a great. Very, very fun-loving. She and I were having a conversation and she said something about pork, and I said, "I love pork." She said, "No!" I said, "Well, I love it. What do you want me to do?" And she'd hang up. We'd both laugh hysterically, and I'd call back and she'd be hysterical. →

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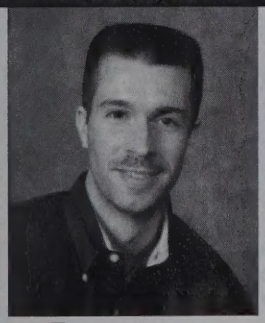

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Mink Stole continued from page 62

couple of years ago, a San Francisco paper, who should have known better, said about a play I was in, "Starring the legendary drag queen Mink Stole."

Can you tell me the first time that you came to know what homosexuality was?

Probably [my first] summer in Provincetown. I felt like I had found home. I'm not gay myself, but I had finally met people who were "others," who were not like everybody else. I had been trying for years to be like everybody else, and I *wasn't*.

Then you could be yourself.

I could start figuring out who myself was. I don't think anybody knows who they are until they've had a chance to figure it out. And while you're still trying to figure why you can't relax with the people you know.

Don't I know. You were brought up Catholic, right?

I was brought up Catholic, but I had already stopped being a Catholic by the time I got to Provincetown. I actually left the church when I was 16.

How did your parents take that?

My father was dead. I didn't have to deal with him. I didn't go, *Nyeh, nyeh, nyeh, I'm not Catholic*. I quietly left. Then when I met John and started making these *profane* movies, my mother was very upset.

Well, duh. How could she not be?

She was absolutely horrified. She saw *Roman Candles*, and there's a scene of a nun in makeup and a priest, both drinking, smoking, and making out. So my mother—which I think is hysterical—was so shocked and appalled that she would not see another of my films until *Polyester*. Which is probably just as well.

That must have been really tough for her.

Well, it needn't have been as tough as she made it.

Do women put the make on you often?

My radar is so out of shape that they might be and I wouldn't even know it. I've been single for so long. I'm one of those people who's not unhappy about it. I've been in love and I love being in love—there's nothing like it—and I've been loved and I've had wonderful relationships, but I like being alone better than I like being unhappy, which is what happens. I haven't got the energy to put into *looking*. If some guy comes along and just happens to fall across my front door, then *maybe*. If he's good-looking, rich, and a lot of fun, *maybe*. I don't feel like my life is diminished by being single.

You were fun in *Girlplay*.

I love *Girlplay*. [At a screening of the film] I have never been in a room with so many lesbians in my life. *Estrogen flying everywhere*. It was like, "Whoa, I don't know what to do with all of this." But it was really fun, and I was really happy.

Last question. What can you say about Divine?

I miss him. His life was just opening up into a whole new phase.

I saw him out of drag in *Trouble in Mind*, and he was excellent.

Yes, he was. When he died, he was in L.A. to start working on *Married with Children*. He died the night before he was to start work. He was going to be an actor, and he wanted that. He was a lovely man, and I miss him.

Dom DeLuise continued from page 62

I have a rack where you can hang hats in my hallway, and Mel would put on a sailor hat, and he'd do a little character, and before they went home, she would be in the hallway laughing for quite a while.

DAVID JAMES/ORION PICTURES CORPORATION

How did DeLuise get to be Aunt Kate in *Haunted Honeymoon*? "I did my Ethel Barrymore imitation, and [Gene Wilder] says, 'I'm doing a movie. Would you like to play my aunt?'"

Was working on the set of a Mel Brooks film fun or serious or both?

Always fun. Always dangerous, because he would allow you to ad lib. It was never serious. Sometimes it was so funny that you'd see people holding their faces tight trying not to laugh. He wanted you to take risks.

Speaking of taking risks, you did drag in *Haunted Honeymoon*.

I'll tell you how I got the job. I was sitting at dinner with Gene Wilder, and I did my Ethel Barrymore imitation, and [Wilder] says, "I'm doing a movie. Would you like to play my aunt?" And I thought, *Me? I have a beard.*

Then I went to London, and they glued on these pink nails, and made my nails *beautiful*. I went to buy something at Harrod's, and when I gave money to the lady, she looks at my hands, and I said, "I'm in a movie, and I'm playing a woman." She said, "Whatever."

Do you remember when you came to know what homosexuality was?

[Said *very* quickly in a demanding voice, but obviously joking:] We don't wanna talk about *this*!

[*Laughs*]

I was in church at the time.

[*Laughs again*]

No. I guess I was growing up in Brooklyn, and I heard the word "fag," and then I heard the words "Greenwich Village" and "the fags in Greenwich Village." Then I played a part in a play one time, and the character's name was Mayberry Flutter.

Do you remember how old you were?

I'm guessing nine. He was a sissy. That's the word I really heard. In fact, when I did the movie with Mel Brooks called *Blazing Saddles*, in the scene with all the dancers, I said, "Pay attention to me, you sissy Marys." Did you ever see that?

Probably a thousand times.

It was like steam escaping, 'cause they said, "Yesssss." Then, also, Mel can be very rude when it comes to a minority of any kind. "Watch me, faggots."

[*Laughs*] That's why he's so f--king funny.

He's wonderful. He dares to go where other people fear.

So when I was asked if *Girl Play* was something I'd like to get involved with, I said, "Oh, I'd love to get involved." I found out after I got there that these ladies were going to be making love in front of me, and I did my part. Everybody was laughing.

Why does Dom DeLuise want "Wipe that *foonja* off your face" on a pillow? How did Anne Bancroft pronounce "potato"? When did Mink Stole play a drunken transvestite? Read the free-wheeling uncut interviews with Dom DeLuise and Mink Stole at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

Blase DiStefano interviewed Shirley MacLaine for OutSmart's *July issue.*

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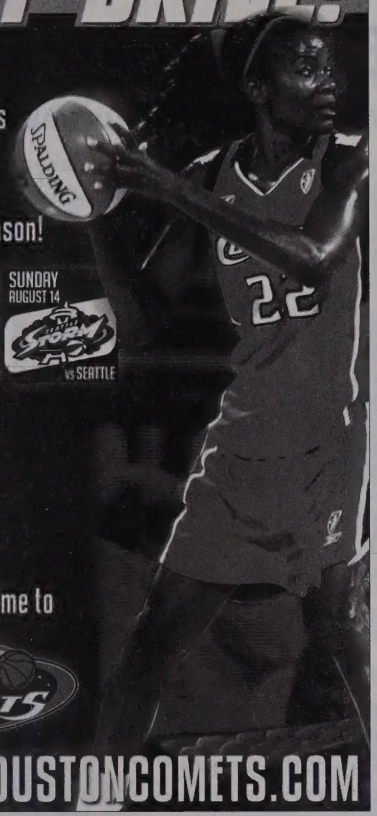

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by Suzie Lynde

SHOWTIME INHALES

It's the debut of Weeds, *which has nothing to do with those* undesirable plants

Nancy Botwin (Mary-Louise Parker, l) and Celia Hodes (Elizabeth Perkins) are friends and rivals in Showtime's new series *Weeds*.

Weeds looks at "typical" family life in the fictional suburban neighborhood of Agrestic, California, where recently-widowed Nancy Botwin (Mary-Louise Parker) plays referee to a circle of dysfunctional suburbanites who assemble at weekend soccer matches, PTA meetings, and other domestic rituals of everyday life. Left with more debt than she expected, Nancy finds it hard making ends meet while raising her two sons, so she's recently become very successful at neighborhood door-to-door sales—not in Mary Kay cosmetics or Tupperware, but pot.

Nancy's friend and nemesis, Celia Hodes (Elizabeth Perkins), is an uptight, superficial PTA president and fellow super-mom, the self-appointed supervisor of the neighborhood's moral values. At times she seems to be the only sane one in the bunch—until she becomes preoccupied with her chubby nine-year-old daughter's weight or hides a nanny-cam to spy on her promiscuous 15-year-old daughter.

Befuddled city councilman Doug Wilson (Kevin Nealon) is one of Nancy's regular clients. Not only does he enjoy a primo dime bag every now and then, but he's also the father of a cocky teenager (Justin Chatwin, who plays Tom Cruise's son in *War of the Worlds*) who is himself a pot dealer—and gay—all unbeknownst to Doug.

Nancy sells only to adults, and would never do pot herself, but she realizes there's a demand and somebody's got to fill it. An über-parent to her kids, a counselor to anyone who needs it, and a confused widow trying to get on with her life, she's ready for anything in this cookie-cutter neighborhood. And what goes on behind closed doors is usually better left that way.

A special sneak preview of *Weeds* airs at 10 p.m. on Sunday, **August 7**, following the *Queer as Folk* one-hour series finale. The official series debut is Monday, **August 8**, at 9 p.m. New episodes will appear on subsequent Mondays at 9 p.m. with repeat airings throughout the week. To confirm schedule: www.sho.com.

Josh Wilson (Justin Chatwin) is the young, gay, dope-dealing son of Doug Wilson (Kevin Nealon).

SHE IS NOT NICOLE KIDMAN

Bravo is giving Kathy Griffin A-list attention with an all-new stand-up comedy special, *Kathy Griffin Is . . . Not Nicole Kidman*, and a six-episode, one-hour unscripted series, *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-list*. • In the special, Griffin offers her take on celebrities such as *American Idol* contestant Clay Aiken and describes a live, on-stage showdown with the ever-coiffed Ryan Seacrest at the Billboard Music Awards. Hysterical and unabashed, the special covers the aspects of Hollywood and celebrity culture everyone suspects but few have the guts to acknowledge on camera. • The series, *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-list*, captures moments in which Griffin lets down her guard, revealing to the viewer how she turns her pathos and vulnerability into her stand-up act. Griffin is living the D-list dream, and both the ups and the downs are documented. For example, Griffin can afford professional hair and makeup—but not every day. Griffin demonstrates her techniques for showering while keeping her head above the stream and sleeping without moving. • The series will also feature Griffin's "peeps," who include her assistant, Jessica; her live-in home decorator, Mike; her "main gays" Dennis and Tony; her overworked public relations team; her parents; and her out-of-town in-laws. • The series reveals the real Griffin apart from her public persona and without the armor typically donned by comics. *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-list* chronicles the day-to-day work required to make a go of Hollywood and earn a living in an industry that's as unforgiving as it is glamorous. • *Kathy Griffin Is . . . Not Nicole Kidman* premieres on Bravo, Wednesday, **August 3**, at 8 p.m., and will kick off the premiere of her equally no-holds-barred unscripted series, *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-list* at 9 p.m.

Want to see Kathy Griffin in person in Houston? She will be the entertainment for the Houston Black Tie Dinner on November 12. You can buy tickets at www.houstonblacktiedinner.org.

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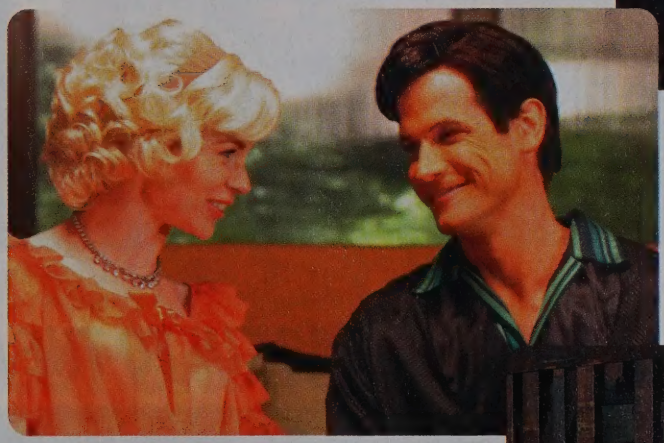

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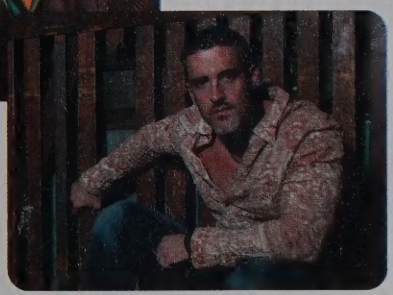

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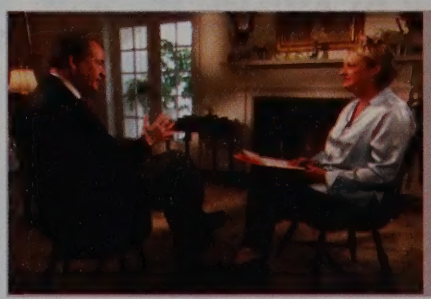
 continued from page 66

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HERE! TV

BIRCH & ROSIE & PAT & MELISSA & . . .

Birch & Company, a new talk show hosted by prominent LGBT leader Elizabeth Birch, premieres Friday, **August 12** on here!, America's first gay television network. The program's one-on-one, half-hour interview format, coupled with Birch's "straight-shooter" style, provides in-depth discussions with important public figures in politics, business, and entertainment. • Birch's inaugural guest will be the out and outspoken Rosie O'Donnell. In this candid interview, Birch unveils the vulnerable aspects of this formidable star, charitable leader, and superb mother. • Emphasizing her ongoing desire to understand what drives each person and perspective, Birch hosts as her followup guest the noted arch conservative Pat Buchanan (airing Friday, August 26). • "Like other LGBT leaders, I have spent the last decade appearing on television programs that go one-inch deep in translating our real lives to this country, usually with the other guest throwing verbal punches. . . . We'll go way beyond politics. We will liberate subjects like love, power, and culture, and hopefully our audience will come away with new understanding and new inspiration," said Birch. • Other upcoming confirmed guests include: Former Vice President Al Gore; the great civil rights leader, Congressman John Lewis; Melissa Etheridge; U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy; Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean; former U.S. Senator Chuck Robb; *Will & Grace* creator and producer Max Mutchnick; conservative commentators Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingram; and the host of MSNBC's *Hardball*, Chris Matthews.



LEFT: Birch interviews Pat Buchanan on August 26. RIGHT: Rosie O'Donnell is Birch's inaugural guest on August 12.

MIDNIGHT MOVIES: FROM THE MARGIN TO THE MAINSTREAM

An official selection at this year's Cannes Film Festival, *Midnight Movies: From the Margin to the Mainstream* focuses on the phenomenon of 1970s cult films, and the major continuing influence they have had on pop culture and modern society. Appearing in the documentary are directors John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*), David Lynch (*Eraserhead*), George Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*), A. Jodorowsy (*El Topo*), Perry Henzell (*The Harder They Come*), and Richard O'Brien (creator and star of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*). The world television premiere of this original documentary airs Friday, August 5, at 11 p.m. on Encore, with a repeat airing on Friday, August 26 at 8:45 p.m. • *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Pink Flamingos*, the original *Reefer Madness*, *The Harder They Come*, and *Night of the Living Dead* air Friday nights and/or *very* early Saturday mornings. Dates/times: www.encoretv.com. ■

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GrooveOut

by Gregg Shapiro

BANDS ON THE RUN

These queer groups will make a music lover proud

With the continuing crossover success of the Scissor Sisters and the growing popularity of Jinx Titanic, queer bands seem to be increasingly in demand. Here are some examples of the current crop of discs by queer artists that deserve to be played loud and proud.

Outmusic Award-winning trio Girlyman follows up its acclaimed 2003 full-length debut *Remember Who I Am* with *Little Star* (Daemon). Sticking with the formula that has earned them so much attention, Doris Muramatsu, Ty (Tylan) Greenstein, and Nate Borofsky of Girlyman keep the harmonies tight and pure and sweet from start to finish—beginning with the catchy, radio-ready pop of "On the Air" and continuing with the love thief's story in "Young James Dean" and the anti-war "Soldiers" through the front porch stomp of "Kittery Tide" and the stunning "I Know Where You Are," which name-checks Joni Mitchell.

Girlyman

Myshkin's Ruby Warblers

Described as "folk pop torch tronic," the 11 songs on *Corvidae* (Double Salt) by Myshkin's Ruby Warblers are timeless country jazz numbers with the occasional synthetic beat that places them as firmly in today as tomorrow. Myshkin's steamy blues belt gives songs their own distinct personalities, from the finger-snapper "Gypsytown," to the whiskey-soaked toetapper "Drunk," to the erratic heartbeat beat-box of "Saving the Day." Like a queer Shivaree, Myshkin and company are unique unto themselves, which is why songs such as "Pipeline," "Human Cannonball," "Blackberry Winter," and "Bird of Paradise" are simply impossible to shake. This is one flock of birds you wouldn't mind having singing outside your window.

Easily one of the most unusual but enthralling discs I've heard in a while, *Maybe Maybe Maybe Baby* (Luv-A-Lot) by gay male/straight female duo Cheese On Bread, is nothing short of delightful. Blending harmonies and humor, Sara →

GrooveOut Shorts

Bob Mould
Body of Song

There is something to be said for consistency in this day and age of diminishing attention spans. Openly gay (and legendary) songwriter Bob Mould pioneered his bright, roaring guitar sound with the '80s punk band Husker Du. This marks his return to that same sound after a brief dip into club music, but he's also employed some of the electronic elements he explored on *Modulate* into the mix—a mix which also features Houstonian Matt Hammon on drums. Known worldwide for his work with Husker Du and Sugar, Mould has already attained iconic status in the rock world, but he's also now becoming much more of an "out" artist and recently appeared at Seattle's Bent Festival, the first gay festival with which he has ever been involved. Expect more to come. (No pun intended.) From Yep Roc Records (www.yeproc.com).

—Lance Scott Walker

Andy Fraser
Naked . . . and Finally Free

You *should* know all about Andy Fraser. We should all know about Andy Fraser, same as we all know about Robert Plant and Jimmy Page. The early-'70s London rock band FREE is known amongst the rock music public as the "band that never happened." FREE was, for better or worse, a bunch of arrogant teenagers who made brilliant records but whose time never came because of an early demise (due in no small part to their attitudes). Well, Fraser has pretty well lost the cockiness, having been humbled by many a personal tragedy (including depression, cancer, AIDS, and a 15-year struggle with sexuality)–and he's formed that into this collection dealing with those hardships via a healthy mix of blues, rock, and African music. Free at last, indeed. Self-released (www.andyfraser.com). *—LSW*

Salomé de Bahia
Brasil

Salomé de Bahia, one of Brazil's most beautiful singers, is back with a new album from Yellow Productions. Along with French and Brazilian classics, *Brasil* is filled with captivating hits including "Outra Lugar" and "Taj Mahal" and unreleased tracks to heat up the dance floors. Irresistible grooves, swirling melodies, and a mix of bossa nova, samba, mambo, and contemporary club music make this a dynamic album. Available August 9 from Tommy Boy Entertainment (www.tommyboy.com). More info: www.bobsinclair.com. *—Andrea Rodricks*

Natasha Bedingfield
Unwritten

It's funny that the record is called *Unwritten*, because not only is it *written*, but the lady also wrote it all herself. That's a tall order for a young solo singer, because that sort of record is typically the work of a producer or a team of writers, etc.—all geared up to launch an artist's career by their rules and on their time. But this South →

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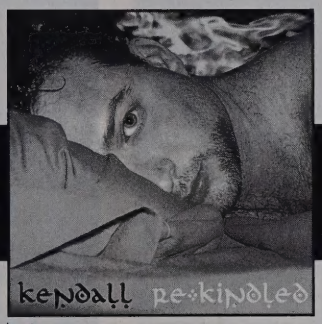

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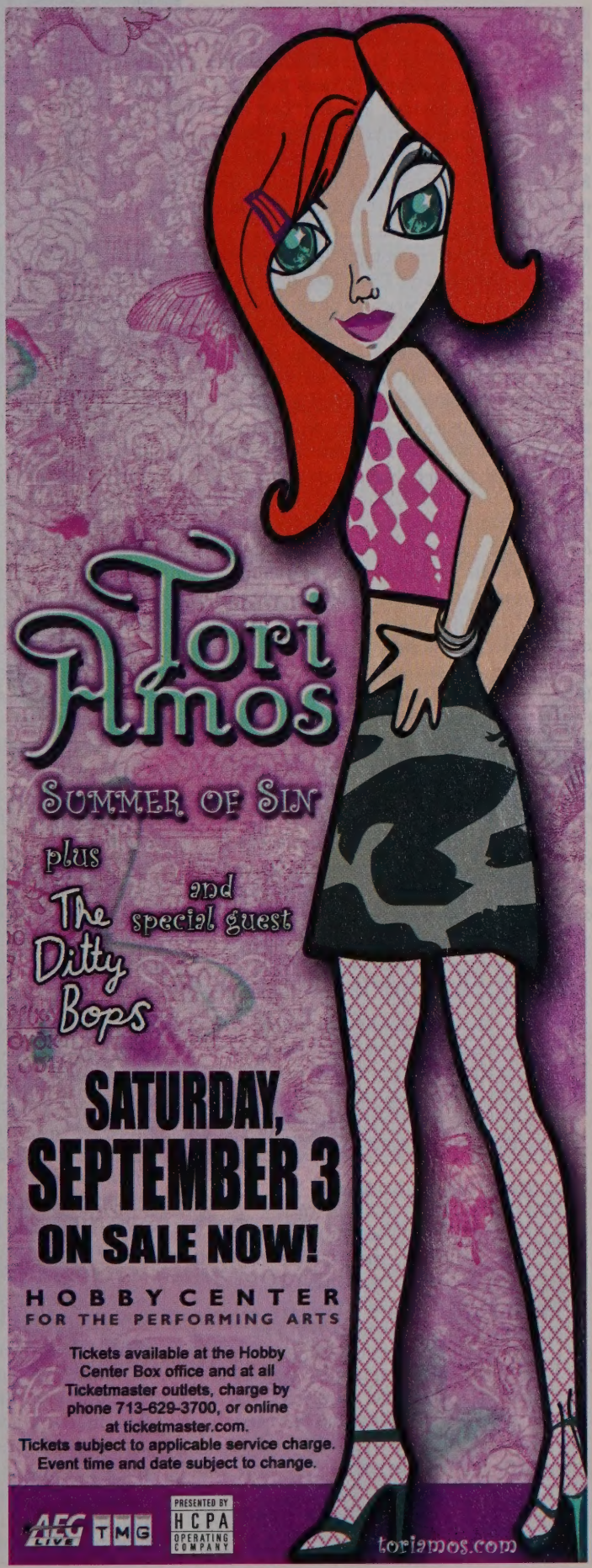


GrooveOut *continued from page 70*

Fitzsimmons and Dan Fishback sing about the lack of eligible guys ("Where the F*ck Are They?"), regretted kisses ("The Kiss Song"), communication breakdowns ("Modern Art Gallery"), diets ("Stepping Out of Ketosis"), mating rituals ("Biological Romance"), lust ("Structure of a Crush"), and fashion victims ("[You're Just a] Gucci Model"), all in their inimitable anti-folk style.

Like Jobriath and The Chicago & New Haven Women's Liberation Band compilations from earlier this year, *How I Saved the World* (Sympathy for the Record Industry) by the Mumps is an essential collection that calls attention to an underappreciated musical act with a considerable connection to the LGBT community. Led by Lance Loud, the openly gay performer who first came to national attention on the PBS reality series precursor *An American Family,* and featuring out musician Kristian Hoffman, the Mumps were regulars at CBGB's and Max's Kansas City in American punk's formative years, beginning in the mid-1970s. The Mumps paid considerable attention to pop song-craft. Just listen to the Bowie-like "Muscle Boys" and the sweet as the Raspberries "Before the Accident," among the 25 tracks on the first disc, to hear what I mean. The second disc is a DVD featuring live video footage, a slide show, and DVD audio live tracks.

If there were elements reminiscent of Patti Smith and Lene Lovich, the godmothers of punk and new wave, respectively, on Sleater-Kinney's previous disc, their

Gravy Train

remarkable 2002 *One Beat,* then the queer trio has reached even deeper into its bag of tricks for influences on *The Woods* (Sub Pop). Ten years after their groundbreaking *Call the Doctor* disc was released, Sleater-Kinney (the longstanding trio of Carrie Brownstein, Janet Weiss, and Corin Tucker) is in peak form. Personally, I couldn't get past the aural assault of the *Peter and the Wolf* revision of the opening track, "The Fox," and returned to it numerous times before moving forward. The politics of relationships are a dominant force here, as can be heard on "Wilderness," "Rollercoaster," the gorgeous "Modern Girl," and the mini-epic "Let's Call It Love." With guitar solos that would make fellow Washington-stater Jimi Hendrix rise from the dead on "What's Mine Is Yours" and the equally vintage hard-rock guitar blasts on

The Organ

Sleater-Kinney

"Steep Air," Sleater-Kinney prove themselves to be arena rockers in search of the perfect arena.

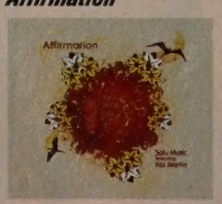
"Brother," the irresistible opening track on *Grab That Gun* (Mint) by The Organ, can also be heard on the soundtrack to *The L Word*'s second season. I'd been hoping for a female-fronted queer entry into the new-wave revival scene, and I'm so glad that The Organ fills that bill. Lead vocalist Katie Sketch manages to be both detached and emotional, two new-wave traits that

GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 70

Londoner via New Zealand doesn't seem to be phased by all of that, with *Unwritten* having shot up to the #1 spot on the UK charts in its debut week. The British music public is eating it up–dare we say as a return to the teen-pop of the '80s? Watch out, Debbie Gibson. From Epic (www.epic.com). *—LSW*

Solu Music featuring Kai Martin
Affirmation



Solu Music is a record label with a mission to release music that you feel rather than just listen to. With musical roots in R&B, soul, and, of course, house, they hope to create quality soulful dance music. The writers/producers clearly demonstrate that house music is all about soul. The album includes full-length mixes and beautiful melodies backed by Kai's vocals. Poetic lyrics and sultry vocals make this a soulful, sexy album from Solu Music and Kai Martin (www.solumusic.com). Available August 9. *—AR* ■

MAKING MUSIC IN HOUSTON

RJN Music, which represents openly gay recording artists Jason & deMarco, recently opened a state-of-the-art digital recording studio in Houston to house their new production company, Letthead Productions.

Jason & deMarco

Letthead Productions works with artists in the beginning stages of their careers as well as working with established artists who are recording new material. Their goal is to offer a place where artists can begin musical projects or continue musical careers in a safe and open environment, and to achieve the highest quality production for minimum costs.

The studio fulfills all production needs, including graphic design and manufacturing. Singer/songwriter Alan Lett acts as producer, and members of his family serve in management positions in the Houston office.

RJN Music intends to make the studio a significant part of its outreach to the community. Jason & deMarco, who will be recording their future albums at Letthead Studios, are proud to provide a welcoming environment in the Houston area for gay and lesbian musicians, no matter where they may be in their musical careers. Info: www.rjnmusic.com. *—Troy Carrington*

JERRY AVENAIM FOR THE ADVOCATE

translate well in songs such as "Steven Smith," "Love, Love, Love," "A Sudden Death," "I Am Not Surprised," and "Memorize the Day." Add to that a New Order-like guitar and an insistent beat, and you have the makings of one of the most exciting new new-wave bands currently out there.

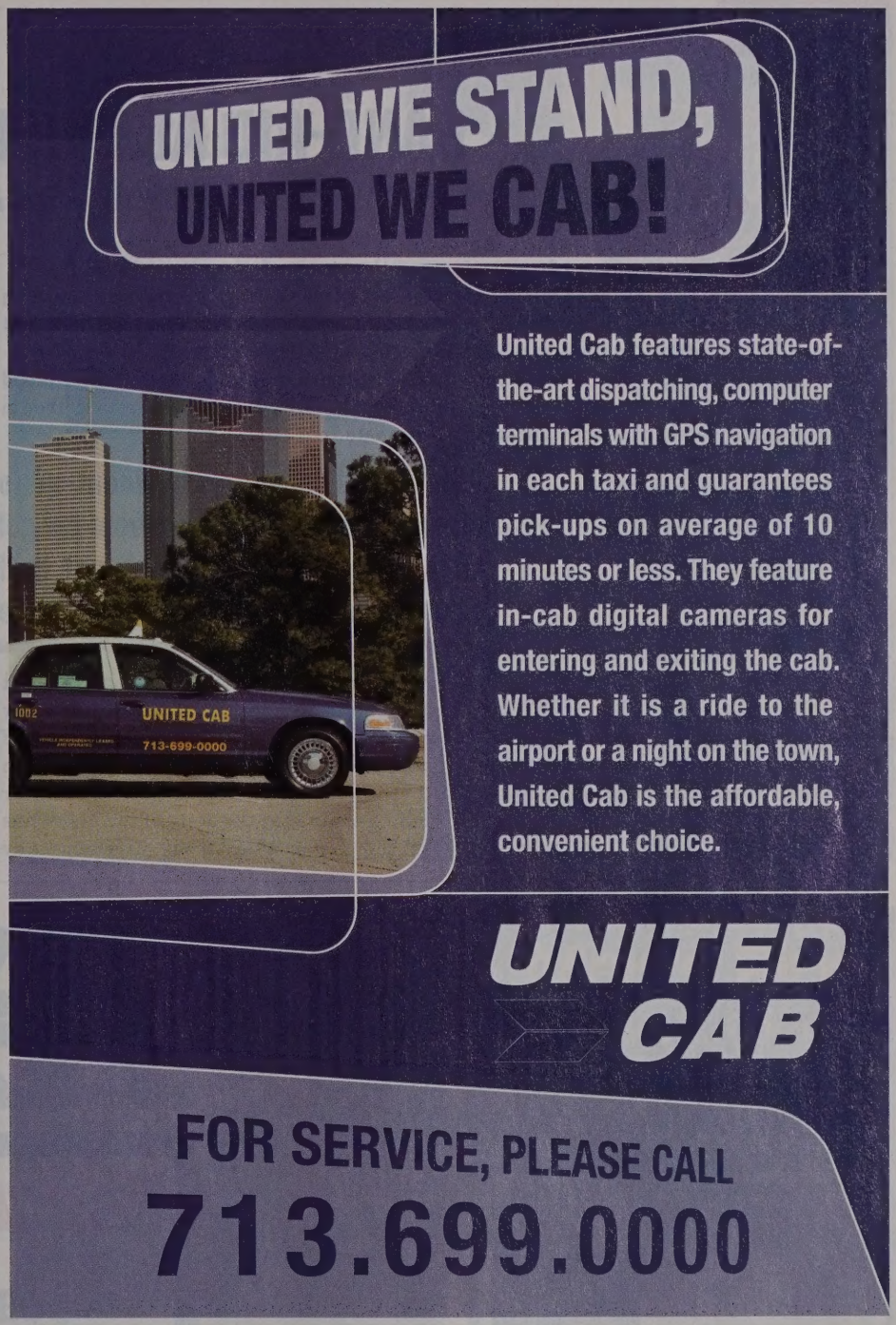
More than 20 years ago, queer singer/songwriter Adele Bertei could be heard singing on the Thomas Dolby hit single "Hyperactive."After releasing a solo disc in the late '80s, which yielded the single "Green Shirt," Bertei was somewhat scarce. That is, until now. As the lead singer of the no-wave trio Anubian Lights, Bertei has come back strong. Their album *Phantascope* (Rhythmbank) opens with Bertei wailing up a blizzard on "Wild Winter."

After a personnel change (Junx replaced Drunx), Gravy Train!!!!, a band that puts the gay into garage, pulls into the station with *Are You Wigglin?* (Kill Rock Stars). Of course, the answer to the question is a resounding yes! How could we even dream of sitting still after hearing the first strains of "Jonny Makeup" about "a coal miner's daughter who turned to the street" with references to "Bad Girls" and "Mickey"? "Darque Tan" echoes some of the electro LeTigre energy we heard on the first album, and "Stop the Wedding" (which was originally heard on 2004's *Ghost Boobs* EP) combines "The Wedding March," a horny Hammond organ, and scratching. "I Wanna Wanna Wanna Wanna Wanna Wanna Wanna Get Rid of You" gets its message across effectively while "(Everybody Do) The Thingy" is a dance craze in the making. "Hump Lites" about getting "in the whole world's pants," "Nudies from the Road," and the cover of "Pussy Sauce," keep Gravy Train!!!!'s sex vibe a-throbbing.

New York scenester Dean Johnson and his band The Velvet Mafia have returned with a new disc, *Cheap But Not Free* (velvetmafiatheband.com). With some of the same band members found on the band's 1998 release, *We Know Where You Live,* The Velvet Mafia is as cheeky and in your face as ever, from the B52's homage "The Girl from Planet Muff," to the queercore punk of "The Pretty One," the gay metal of "Testosterone," the sweet and suggestive "Make a Mess," and the unabashedly graphic "The Big Johnson," The Velvet Mafia rocks the house.

ON THE WEB: Read more of Gregg Shapiro's recommendations at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

Gregg Shapiro is a past recipient of the annual OutMusic award that recognizes involvement by non-musicians in furthering the work of GLBT performers.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by Sally Sheklow

BAND-AID ACTIVISM

Sally decides that any action is preferable to inaction, even in the bathroom

Sometimes, when our sense of personal power wears thin, we need to remind ourselves that we can make a difference. We've got the depressing reality of the smirking chimp still in the White House, the constitutional challenge to marriage equality, and an all-out right-wing assault on Sponge Bob. Still, our activist hearts drive us to step up, come out, and change something—anything.

Consider last Sunday. I was just getting over a nasty cold and trying to muster the wherewithal to face another day under red-state rule. Determined to focus on something more uplifting than Oregon's Supreme Court justices bandying about the "mootness" of my marriage, I set out to use my one obligation-free day to catch up on household responsibilities. The schmutz factor had gained momentum while I was under the weather, and our place was a mess.

I needed a chore I could accomplish despite my wimpy, low energy. I had just settled on changing the kitty litter as a doable task, when my domestic partner piped up with "Let's tackle the bathroom cabinets."

What good is our assortment of loose tampons and pads left over from our golden days of ovulation if we can't get to them when we have a fertile houseguest in need?

Organizing toiletries was the farthest thing from my mind. That project has never in my life made it anywhere near the top of my priority list—especially these days with all the meetings, marches, and lobbying for our equality that the state of the union has forced me to add to my already-busy schedule. Who has time for cupboard cleaning?

But Wifey was raring to go, motivated, inspired. How could I refuse her? Why not let her determination for creating orderly shelves carry me. Working together, I reminded myself, we could face anything. The people united will never be defeated. Multiply love by the power of two. We can do it.

When I was burning up with fever, I couldn't even find the thermometer in our messy cabinet. Now was the time to confront the tangle of tweezers, Q-tips, loose Band-Aids, Band-Aids in boxes, and random Band-Aid boxes with nothing in them. The next time I am down with something, I should at least be able to take my temperature without having to rifle through bent-bristled toothbrushes, used-up tubes of paste, creams, and salves, and a hodgepodge of

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past-date prescription bottles—as if there were some emotional attachment to antibiotics from 1995—all sitting on a sticky glaze of dust and unidentifiable goo.

Just as getting married should be accessible without having to battle the law, retrieving a washcloth to cool a fevered brow shouldn't require wrestling a snarl of disorderly towels and general lavatory detritus. What good is our assortment of loose tampons and pads left over from our golden days of ovulation if we can't get to them when we have a fertile houseguest in need? Getting what we need has been impossible with the current state of the cabinet—ours or W's.

Sooner or later we all have to sort out our Ace bandages, gauze rolls, athletic tape, shampoo bottles, poison oak wash, and sundry wrist, back, knee, and ankle braces. Everyone should have easy access to support in the event of unexpected twists and strains. At some point we must create change. If not now, when?

Sure, times are hard, complicated, overwhelming. But better to do *some*thing than fret about everything and do nothing. Don't mourn, organize. We sorted, tossed, recycled, scrubbed, and voted out extraneous, past term limit has-beens.

Never underestimate the power of women. We heard the call to action, and we responded. Our medicine cabinet is now sparkly clean, and everything inside is visible and within reach. I am especially proud of the orderly new Band-Aid file, arranged from tiny to large, ready to dress all our superficial wounds well into the next administration—may it come soon.

Our cupboard stands united. The washcloths are neatly squared and ready for easy retrieval, towels folded and sorted by size. Braces and wraps are stowed up high in a first-aid basket with other only occasionally needed items such as the vaporizer and our heaven-sent, vulva-cupping female urinal (an item I'll campaign for hospitals to routinely offer, once our equal rights are finally federally protected).

That's it. Mission accomplished. Bathroom cupboard and medicine cabinet finished in only a couple of hours. Our shelves are clean and organized, and we got rid of a lot of unnecessary junk—a process we are now free to pursue on a larger, more global scale.

Collaborating with my darling mate left me feeling successful and inspired enough to take on other challenging tasks. Today the kitty litter, tomorrow the world.

Sally Sheklow tidies up in Eugene, Oregon. In June, she received first and second place in the magazine column category at the Houston Press Club Lone Star Awards.

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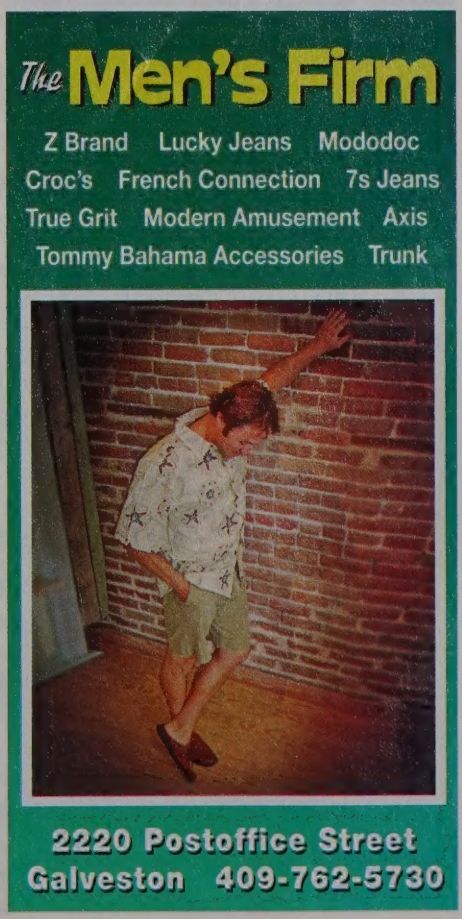

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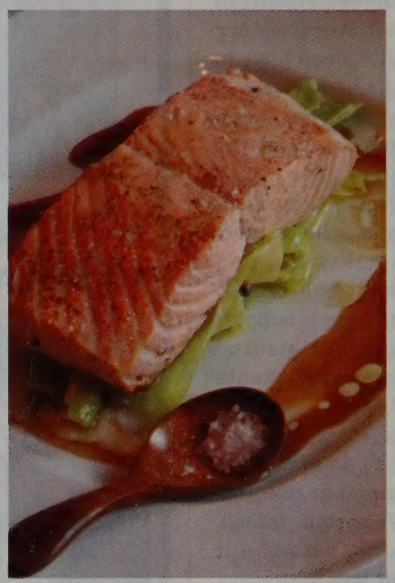
KITCHEN KUDOS

The chef at Rouge wins a top honor



Fancy fish dish: Chef Edel Goncalves's salmon confit at Rouge. *Travel & Leisure* has named him the top American chef.

From the moment it opened just over two years ago, Rouge has been one of the swankiest restaurants in Montrose. The top-notch new American cuisine with a French accent and the posh, burgundy dining room has attracted a loyal following of foodies and scenesters. Now chef/owner Edelberto "Edel" Goncalves has been named the best of America's top 40 chefs of 2005 by *Travel & Leisure*.

Edelberto "Edel" Goncalves

The 33-year-old Goncalves is acclaimed here and beyond for sterling dishes that include Maine lobster Tagine, salmon confit, seared foie gras, and *suppions* (stuffed calamari). The French native "did his apprenticeship at the Michelin two-star Goumard-Prunier in Paris and then worked his way around other restaurants in the French Michelin constellation," pointed out his bio at a James Beard Foundation benefit dinner in Houston that he was chosen to cook for last year. Goncalves arrived in Houston in 1998 to work at Grille 5115. He also spent time in the Masraff's kitchen. *My Table,* the local restaurant magazine, named Rouge one of its best restaurants in 2003.

Sandwiched between the venerable El Fenix (still open despite reports of its demise) and the Plant House and the police substation, Rouge has slipped into the neighborhood, serving as a destination of choice for well-appointed members of the community. For the past two years, Rouge has also hosted, in its second-floor ballroom, the Pride month political event presented by the National Association of Lesbian & Gay Journalists-Houston.

Rouge, 812 Westheimer, 713/520-7955, www.rougehouston.com

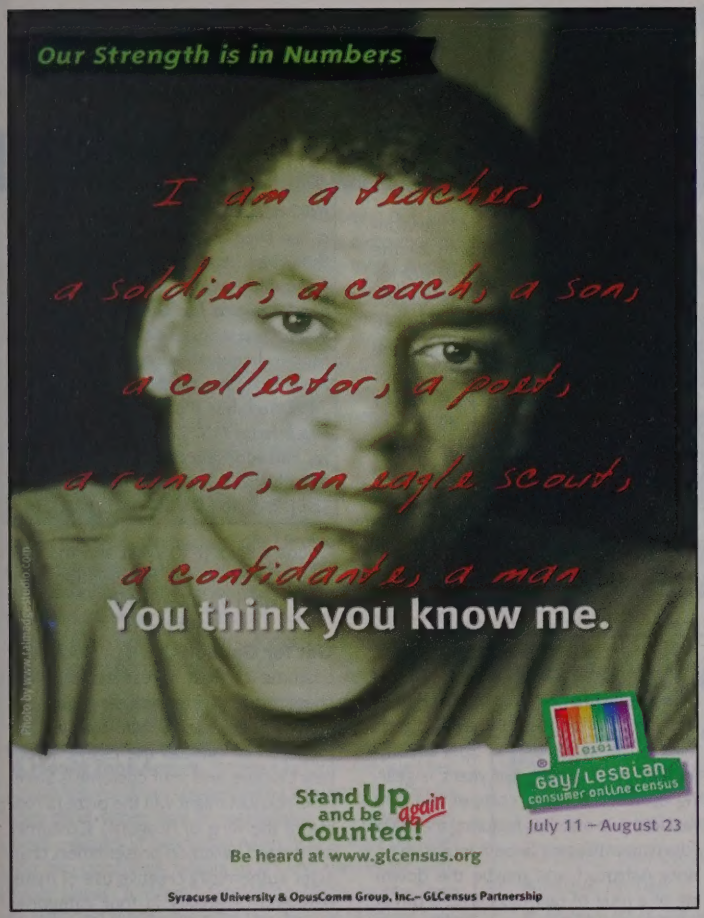
CLOCK WATCHERS

Until recently a 24-hour eatery, Montrose Diner isn't quite open around the clock anymore. The new hours are 9 a.m.–midnight Sunday–Wednesday and 9 a.m.–3 a.m. Thursday–Saturday.

On August 9, the restaurant hosts GLBT Night at Montrose Diner. The monthly event, sponsored by the Houston GLBT Community Center, has moved to the second Tuesday of the month.

Montrose Diner, 1111 Westheimer, 713/520-8281, www.montrosediner.com

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROUGE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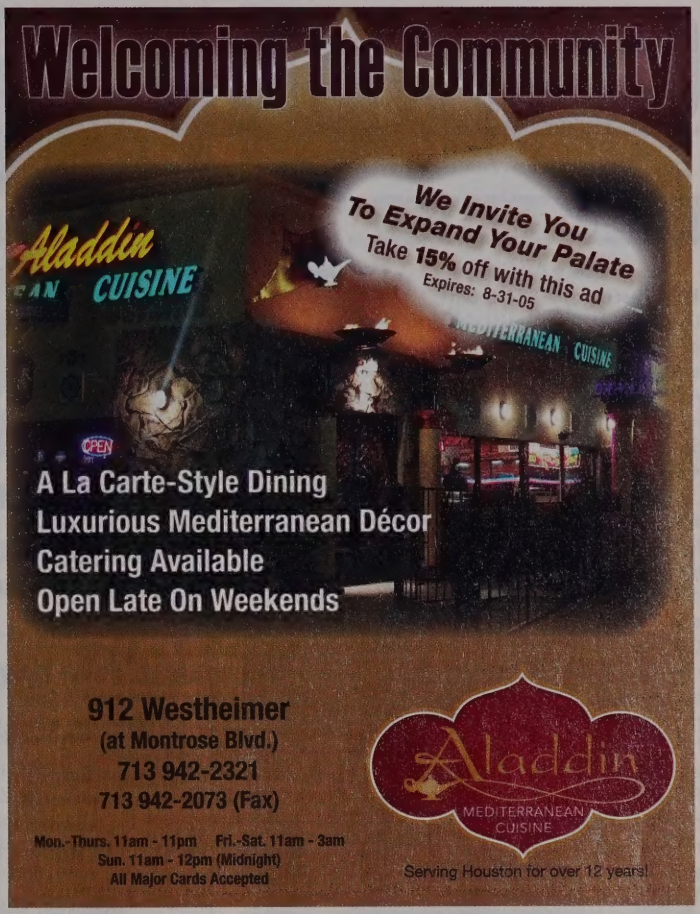
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Calendar of Events

Deadline for *OutSmart*'s September issue is 5 p.m., Thursday, August 11.

AUGUST

Daily (Mon.–Fri.)

HIV Testing. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic is offering HIV testing free to the public, 9 am–1 pm. There is no need to establish eligibility ("gold-card"), no donation will be asked of the person seeking testing, and the test is free. Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas, 713/873-4157 or 713/873-4026.

Daily (Mon.–Sat.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing at these locations. ***Monday:*** Bricks, 617 Fairview, 4–8 pm; O, 710 Pacific, 9 pm–1 am. ***Tuesday:*** The 611, 611 Hyde Park, 4–8 pm; Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8 pm–midnite. ***Wednesday:*** Mary's, 1100 Westheimer, 4–8 pm; Ripcord, 715 Fairview, 9 pm–1 am; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm–1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm–1 am. ***Thursday:*** All-Star News, 3415 Katy Frwy, 4–8 pm; BRB, 2400 Brazos, 8 pm–midnite; Cousins, 817 Fairview, 8 pm–midnite. ***Friday:*** EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm–1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm–1 am; The Meatrack, 2915 San Jacinto, 10 pm–2 am; Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto, 10 pm–1 am. *The clinic offers classes for those newly diagnosed with HIV or Hepatitis C. For more info: 713/830-3000.*

5, 12, 19 (Fri.)

Smarty Party. Could this be what Cole Porter was referring to in his song, "Did You Ever?," a do at a museum? Kick off your Friday night with *Mixers, Elixirs and IMAX*, the summer hotspot where adults mix, mingle, and drink up. Dance under the dinosaurs to live music, have a cocktail, take in an IMAX. Who said museums were stuffy? $10 for museum members, $12 per person, and $20 for couples (IMAX ticket included). Cash bar. Identification required. 7–10 pm through August 19 at One Hermann Circle Drive. Information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Information in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

12 & 13 (Fri. & Sat.)

When You Wish Upon a Star. The Houston Museum of Natural Science sponsors a rare opportunity to see the bright lights of the annual Perseid meteor shower. Be it romantic inspiration or educational enlightenment, nothing beats a display of shooting stars. Bring the kids for a living example of the wonders of astronomy just in time for the Fall semester and a reason to shoot for the stars. $3 per person to enter Brazos Bend State Park; $3 per person to view through the Gueymard Telescope at the George Observatory; $2 per person for use of the two smaller Observatory telescopes; viewing through the volunteer telescopes on the Observatory's observation deck is free. As early as 10 pm Friday evening through dawn Saturday, Aug. 13, at Brazos Bend State Park. To reach the park, take U.S. 59 South past Sugar Land to the Crabb River Road exit. Turn left and follow the brown signs to the park. Info: 281/242-3055 or www.georgeobservatory.org.

12 & 13 (Fri. & Sat.)

Shaping Up & Actin' a Fool. ComedySportz-Houston, having placed third in the nationwide C-Sportz competition for the past five years, is gearing up for this year's competition, and will hold two matches featuring the 2005 Tournament Teams. Expect intensive hilarity, Astroturf, and maybe the downing of a mug of raw eggs. $12. 8 pm at the ComedySportz Arena, 901 Town & Country Blvd. (I-10 West and the Sam Houston Parkway). Reservations and information: 713/868-1444.

13 (Sat.)

GetYer Gandolf On. It's a Hobbitastic costume contest. Dress as your fave character from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (perhaps the openly gay Ian McKellen as Gandalf the Grey). If your heart is pure, and your costume is Shire-riffic, you just might win the prize (a replica of the Ring of Aragorn). Costumes are judged based on presentation, character authenticity, creative use of materials, and originality in four categories based on gender and age. 1–3 pm at

INFO NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT LISTING: a few lines of info about your event; date/time; cost; location/address; organization name; AND two phone numbers—one for *OutSmart* to reach you for questions and one for *OutSmart* readers to get more info on your event. *Mail info to:* OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston 77006. *Fax info to:* 713/522-3275. *E-mail info to:* calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—THU., AUG. 11.

GEORGE HIXSON

TAMALALIA TURNS TEN

The beginning of the end of Houston's longest-running original musical series takes audiences on a greatest-hits tour

When Infernal Bridegroom Productions' Tamarie Cooper staged the first *Tamalalia* at the Orange Show in 1996, she had no idea her campy musical would become an instant cult phenomenon. From a bus tour visiting bovine dancers infected with mad cow disease to revisiting Duran Duran via a time traveling sit-n-spin to a rasher of bacon's pas de deux, Cooper's shows have been exceptional.

For her final hoorah, Cooper looks back at her baby and marvels at how it's grown. Highlights of Tamalalias past will send some viewers into nostalgic sugar-shock and make newcomers regret what they've missed. For those who want more, there's plenty of memorabilia and merch. Dibs on the Skeletor and Papa Smurf costumes. *—Eric A.T. Dieckman*

What: *Tamalalia 10*
When: 8 p.m., through September 3
Where: The Axiom, 2524 McKinney
How much? $5.99–$17
Info: 713/522-8443 or www.infernalbridegroom.com

Tamarie Cooper (center) is surrounded by her cohorts (clockwise from top): Richard Lyders, Cary Winscott, Karina Pal-Montano, Noel Bowers, Charlesanne Rabensburg, Kyle Sturdivant.

the Houston Museum of Natural Science in the Grand Hall, One Hermann Circle Drive. Information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Information in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

28 (Sun.)

Blazers and Pick-Ups. Passionfruit Video hosts a premiere screening of its independent lesbian movie *How to Pick Up Girls, a Guide for the Dating Impaired.* Kate and Angie are two singles new to being out and awkward at dating. Sunny and Porsche are experienced cruisers. Together they learn how to hone their Gaydar at clubs and uncover the meaning of "butch snackcake." With music from Cindy Pruitt, Astrogin, and Rachel Sage, *How To* won best debut at the Fort Worth film festival, was selected for the 2004 AGLIFF festival, and the world premiere (at Austin's Arbor Theatre) sold out. 7 pm at Chances Bar, 1102 Westheimer. Information: 713/523-7217 or www.passionfruitvideo.com.

28 (Sun.)

Theatricalifragilisticexpialidocious. The annual Theatre District Open House gives the public a rare opportunity to see and sample Houston's downtown arts organizations up close. Free. At the Alley Theatre (615 Texas Ave.), the Hobby Center (800 Bagby), the Wortham Center (500 Texas Ave.), the Angelika Film Center (510 Texas Ave.), and Jones Plaza (500 Louisiana). Information: 713/223-4544.

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ ***Honky Tonk Angels.*** Angela, Darlene, and Sue Ellen are on the run from (respectively) a bullying husband, a controlling father, and an obnoxious boss when they meet—guitars in hand—on a bus bound for Nashville. The trio pool their talents as a band named for Kitty Wells' classic "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," and quickly become the darlings of Music City, U.S.A. Playwright Ted Swindley, creator of *Always...Patsy Cline* and Stages' founding artistic director, directs the Houston premiere of his tribute to the ladies of country music. This nostalgic revue salutes the hits of Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire, Jeannie C. Riley, and Pam Tillis. $25. Through September 18 at Stages, 3201 Allen Parkway at Waugh Drive. Tickets: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

♦ ***I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!*** A Stages fave. The musical about the modern-day roller-coaster ride of romance, the devastation of dating, and the maelstrom of mating returns. Why? Because we're all addicted to the little snippets of ecstasy that accompany the torrent of pains of love. $25. Through October 31 at Stages, 3201 Allen Parkway at Waugh Drive. Tickets: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

♦ ***Just Shut Up and Drive!*** The impoverished singing Fertle family packs up into an '82 Buick with no A/C and drives cross-country to stay with their filthy-rich San Diego relatives for whom they don't really care. Three actors portray an enormous cast, sometimes switching from one to another in a flash. $20. Through August 27, Thursday and Friday, 8 pm and 10:30 pm, at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquit near Richmond and Kirby. Tickets: 713/522-7722.

♦ ***Stream of Consciousness: The Verge of Sanity.*** Bob Morgan, dos chicas resident playwright, evolves the short-play showcase into a state of dramatic cohesion. Five local writers weave their vignettes into a unified script that flows together by means of segues and monologues involving the evening's narrator. Morgan assures the contributing playwrights, "were told ... to make it funny, give it an edge, and nothing is sacred or off limits." The featured writers are Morgan, Paul Locklear, Rick Smith, Elizabeth Seabolt, and Sophia Ansari. In Rick Smith's *The Making of a Cult Icon*, a film crew attempts to make the first necrophilia porno →

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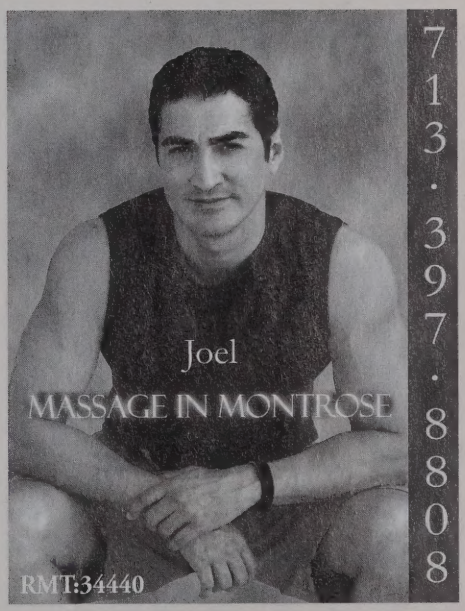

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wherein the victim is brought back from the dead. In Morgan's *The Program*, after months in a pray-out-the-gay church program, Danny is kidnapped by two concerned friends who want to reintegrate him into his former gay lifestyle. $10 Fridays and Saturdays, pay-what-you-want on Sundays. August 12–27 at The Savoy Room in The Houston School, 5250 Gulfton, Suite 4A. Tickets/info: 832/283-0858 or dccommune@yahoo.com or www.geocities.com/dccommune.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

♦ **HYPE.** The Houston Young Playwrights Exchange festival features readings of six works by local teenagers. See the next big dramatists before they break through. $5. Friday, August 12–Sunday, August 14 at the Alley Theatre's Neuhaus Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets and information: 713/228-8421.

♦ **Theater District Annual Open House for Educators.** Teachers, principals, cultural coordinators, and parent volunteers learn about the Alley Theatre's education and outreach offerings and catch a sneak preview of the upcoming season's performances. 9 am–noon at Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall. Info: 713/223-4544.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours.** Saturdays, 1–4 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-5738.

♦ **Queer Voices.** Mondays, 7–9 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ ***Bill Traylor, William Edmonson, and the Modernist Impulse.*** Both considered "outsider" artists whose works reflect the roots of African-American culture, a connection also exists between both Traylor and Edmonson and the "official" avant-garde of the period. Born a slave, Traylor never drew a single image until he was 83. When he died 10 years later, he had created over 1,500 works. Born into poverty, Edmonson used discarded stones to fashion simple tombstones of abstract form and divine inspiration. Through September 25 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. For information: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ ***Cy Twombly: Fifty Years of Works on Paper.*** One of the greatest living American artists, Cy Twombly's exhibit presents over 80 works on paper dating from 1953 to 2002, from early monotypes to the major mythological cycles of the later years. Through September 4 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. For information: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ ***Fantasy Worlds: Exploring the Limits of Life.*** From boiling-hot springs to frigid Antarctic ice, biologists have found microbes thriving in environments once thought too extreme to sustain life. Search for these extremophiles in the most severe areas on Earth. For each type of extremophile found, visit an imaginary alien planet on which each might also thrive. $5 for adults; $3.50 for children ages 3–11. At the Burke Baker Planetarium, Houston Museum of Natural Science. Tickets and information: 713/639-4629 (713/639-4603 for Spanish) or www.hmns.org.

♦ ***Fighter Pilot.*** Ride in an F-15 Eagle fighter plane as the IMAX Theatre follows fighter pilots from around the world. Roll, flip, maneuver, and speed through the skies at Red Flag, an international training exercise. Watch new pilot John Stratton fly among German Tornados, Israeli F-16s, British Harrier jump jets and Canadian F-18 Hornets during this wild ride. Houston Museum of Natural Science. Tickets and information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **From Sea to Shining Sea Film Festival.** Travel the country without leaving home with this IMAX film festival. See America, from the uncharted frontier in *Lewis & Clark: Great Adventure West* to the beauty of our iciest state in *Alaska: Spirit of the Wild. Across the Sea of Time*, a film about New York and immigration, *Adventures in Wild California, Mark Twain's America, Grand Canyon, Fighter Pilot: Operation Red Flag*, and *Texas: The Big Picture* also play daily throughout the six-week festival. August 15–September 29 at One Hermann Circle Drive. Information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Information in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

♦ ***Gold! Natural Treasure, Cultural Obsession.*** Gold has fascinated mankind for centuries. Experience the allure of one of the world's most coveted minerals in *Gold! Natural Treasure, Cultural Obsession*, the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of gold objects, natural gold specimens, and gold bullion ever assembled. At One Hermann Circle Drive. Information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Information in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

♦ **Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.** Two, two, two exhibits in one. In one gallery, that is. The H-triple C presents *CURV-ITURE* and *Texas Masters Series: Harlan Butt. CURV-ITURE*, organized by The Furniture Society, features furnishings both whimsical yet functional. *The Texas Masters Series* spotlights the master metalsmithing of Harlan Butt. Free. Through September 4 at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. For more information: 713/529-4848 or www.crafthouston.org.

♦ ***Kent Ullberg: A Retrospective.*** Taking inspiration from the world around him, Kent Ullberg has sculpted wildlife he has encountered in his worldwide travels for 30 years. The exhibit examines the artist's fascination with animals through large-scale bronze and stainless steel sculptures that evoke the spirit and beauty evident in the natural world. Opens August 15 at One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Info in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

♦ ***Landscape Confection.*** Eleven new and established artists who have broadened the scope of landscape painting demonstrate how one of the most conventional genres of Western art can be explored and enlivened. Artists include Roweena Dring, Jim Hodges, and Ktie Prett. Through September 18 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. For information: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

♦ ***The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: The Exhibition.*** Well, Bilbo my Baggins! Though it may sound obscenely commercial, what better way to introduce obstinate kids to a museum than to dress it up as The Shire? The exhibit goes behind-the-scenes of the Academy Award-winning films (starring the openly gay Ian McKellen as Gandalf) featuring hundreds of pieces of memorabilia, original costumes, and jewelry, including the central icon—The One Ring. Houston Museum of Natural Science. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ ***Mystic India.*** Join Neelkanth, an 11-year-old child yogi on his IMAX documented travels. He walks barefoot across India for seven years and covers 8,000 miles, experiencing the vast diversity of the region on an unforgettable journey. On his travels, he sees the mountains, rivers, deserts, and deltas that cover India's natural landscape, and experiences the astounding art and architecture, intriguing rituals and colorful customs, fascinating festivals and timeless traditions of the Indian people. As part of the HMNS' celebration of India, photos and jewelry are also on exhibit and traditional Indian desserts are available Saturday and Sunday. $7 adults; $4.50 seniors (62+) and children (3–11).

Through Sept. 11 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ ***Perspectives 147: Adrian Paci.*** The first U.S. solo exhibition of the Albanian artist portrays his experience as an immigrant (Paci now resides in Italy). Media includes video and monochromatic, multi-tonal watercolor drawings. Italian cinema lovers will want to look for Paci's interpretations of scenes from the films of writer/director Pier Paolo Pasolini, an influence on the artist's work. Through October 2 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. For information: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

♦ **Plowing Stones.** Rather than an historical perspective, artist Saúl Balagura lends an abstract conception of the emotion, drama, and courage of one of history's darkest periods. The 28 new works in oil, acrylic, and watercolor include a 24-foot installation, all inspired without Balagura ever even setting foot in a concentration camp. Balagura will also debut his book of poetry and prose under the same name. Coinciding with his exhibit at the museum, Balagura's "Girls Series" will be shown at the Anya Tish Gallery, 4411 Montrose through August 20. Free. Through September 25 in the Mincberg Gallery at Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. Information: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

♦ ***POPulence.*** Organized by guest curator and art critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, David Pagel, this exhibit features 50 works by 19 internationally recognized contemporary artists. Polly Apfelbaum, Marcelo Pombo, and Takashi Murakami, among others, contribute to this exploration of Pop Art's zest for consumer culture and sense of surface opulence. Through August 27 at the Blaffer Gallery of the University of Houston, entrance # 16 off Cullen Blvd. Information: 713/743-9530 or www.blaffergallery.org.

♦ ***Pulse: A Stomp Odyssey.*** The acclaimed performers of the show STOMP explore the sights and sounds of continents and cultures in this IMAX film. Discover the universal language of rhythm through percussion traditions from Brazil to West Africa, from a 25,000-year-old tribal tradition in Botswana to the Kodo drummers of Japan. Through September 18 at One Hermann Circle Drive. Information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Information in Spanish is available at 713/639-4603.

♦ **The Wiess Energy Hall** returns after almost a year of renovations. Filled with giant high-resolution screens, the exhibit is a fluid art gallery of energy. Upgraded touch-screen computer interactives utilize the latest in computer animation technology. Improved hands-on exhibits, including a five-foot-tall scale model of a wind turbine, a working well log, and the "Energy Matrix" engage the imagination. $6 for adults, $3.50 seniors (62+) and children (3–11). At the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 (713/639-4603 for Spanish) or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Yale Street Arts & Flower Market** is a Heights market created for local artists to display and sell their original works of art. Fresh-cut flowers are also available. Entertainment is provided by local musicians and is a highlight throughout the day. The market is free & open to the public from 9 am–5 pm and continues the first Saturday of each month, coinciding with the Heights 1st Saturday events. It is located behind Kaplan's Ben-Hur at 210 West 21st Street just off Yale. Free parking is available in the Kaplan's parking lot. Info or booth rental: Mitch Cohen at 713/802-1213 or visit www.YaleStreetMarket.com. ■

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for the September issue:
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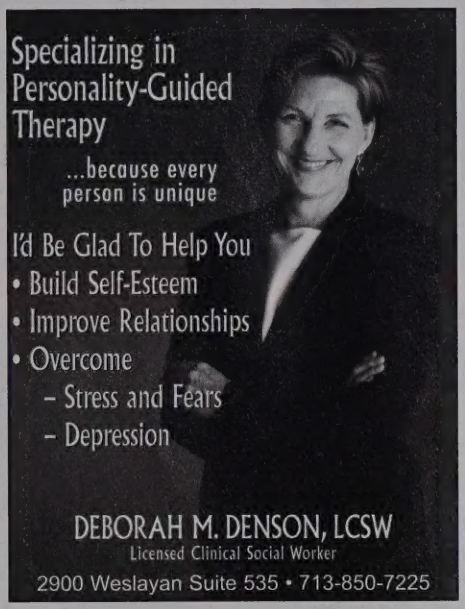
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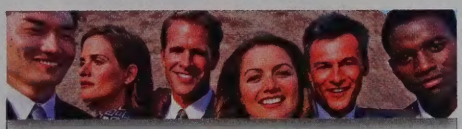
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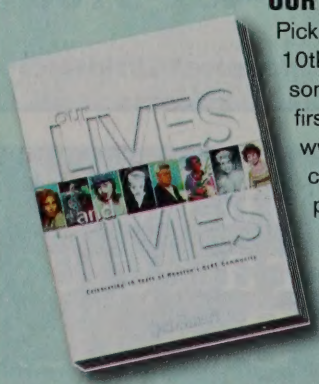
The OUTSMART parade contingent: (front row, l-r) Tim Brookover, Daniel Malachowski, Thomas Chelena, Tim Butler, Fidencio Rodriguez, Tad Dvorak, Tom Fricke, Mike Sterner, Greg Jeu, Jim Hurst; (middle row, l-r) Alan Moehle, Eric Dieckman, Dolores Varela, Sandra Rodriguez, Gloria Silva, Alberto Mata; and (top row, l-r) Billy Woo and Joey Rodriguez.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Check out this event supported by OUTSMART: 8/9 **GLBT Night at Montrose Diner** hosted by the Houston GLBT Community Center, with door prizes provided by OUTSMART. Info: 713/524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

ON PARADE

Magazine staff, family, and friends represented at the June 25 Pride parade with our famous pink sheep. Planet Ford provided the official OUTSMART vehicle.



OUR LIVES AND TIMES

Pick up your copy of the OUTSMART 10th-anniversary book, featuring some of the best articles from our first decade. Check our website, www.outsmartmagazine.com, or call 713/520-7237. Half of the purchase price of each book ($20 plus tax and postage for mail/web orders) benefits nonprofit GLBT organizations in the community.

TALK TO US

On August 10, meet editor Tim Brookover and other magazine staff at the second Talk Back To OUTSMART evening at the Houston GLBT Community Center. The conversation (and registration for door prizes) begins at 6:30 p.m.

COURTESY TERESA ANDERSON

OUTSMART traveled to Mexico with (kneeling, l-r) Teresa Anderson, Georgette Monaghan, (standing, l-r) Janice Ladd, Lezlie Gless, Ellen Novota, and Lorraine Schroeder.

SHOW US YOUR OUTSMART!

OUTSMART's own Teresa Anderson and spouse Lorraine Schroeder toted the magazine on a trip to Mexico with friends.

Going out of town? Take OUTSMART along. Snap a picture of yourself at your destination and send it to us. We will publish our favorites. Readers who submit photos that we print will be entered into a drawing for prizes. Send *high-resolution* images to editor@OutSmartMagazine or mail photos to 3406 Audubon, Houston, TX 77006.

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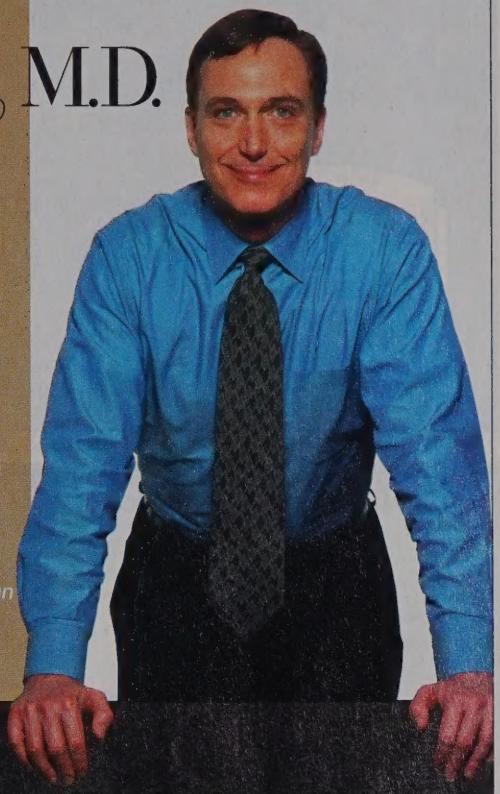

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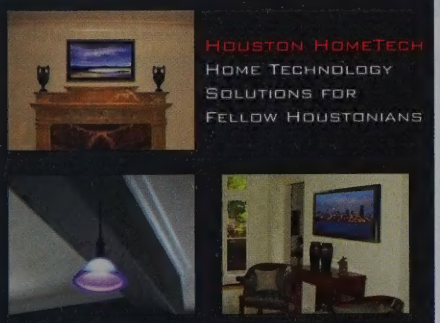

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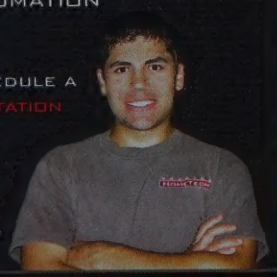

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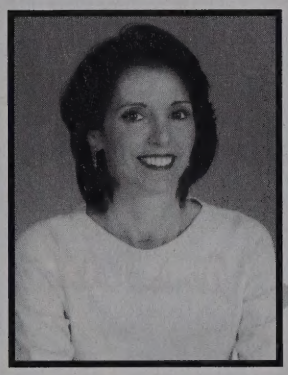

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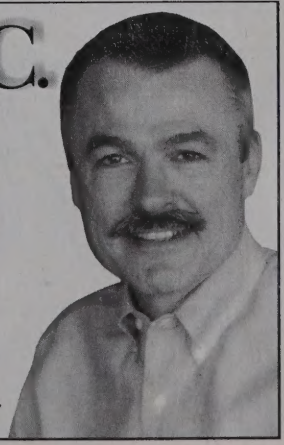

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Business News

COURTESY DARRELL AGUILAR

Darrell Aguilar (pictured) has joined the staff of **The Metropolitan** office of **Keller Williams Realty**. Aguilar, a native Houstonian born in the Heights, specializes in the near-Loop and the Cottage Grove area.

Aguilar's phone numbers are 713/480-8612 (direct) and 713/621-8001 (office). His website is www.NearTheLoopLiving.com.

Western Talk, L.C., will host a grand opening celebration for its Midtown location (514 Elgin, 713/861-0811) on August 19, 5–8 p.m. Finger foods, wine, and refreshments will be served. Western Talk, a cellular phone and wireless service provider, will give away prizes, including a grand prize BlackBerry. The Western Talk staff

CHRISTINA MARTINEZ/RAINBOW PAGES

includes (l–r) **Rico Lozano**, **Tom Bridges**, **Alicia Tarazona**, **Kerry Sheppard**, and **Dan Sheppard**. They were photographed at the Midtown location during the July 8 Amazing Race event organized by the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce.

Alan Davidson recently announced a new home, identity, and website for his **Essential Touch** firm, which offers massage, movement instruction coaching, and spa services. His private studio is located at 1103-B Peveto in Montrose. The phone number is 713/942-0923. His website, www.throughyourbody.com, features nude photographs by Victoria Davis that are included in his upcoming book, *Living Through Your Body: Mastering Your Body's Wisdom for Higher Health and Happiness.*

Vendors at the June 18–19 Empower 2005 business and community expo included **AXA Advisors, LLC** staff:

THOMAS CHELENA

(l–r) **Brandy Laakso**, **George Hawkins**, **Allen Schneider**, and **Chris Laqakso**. AXA Advisors, which offers financial services and products, is located at 777 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 450. The phone number is 713/402-6409. Websites are www.georgehawkins.com and www.chrislaakso.com.

Empower, presented by the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce, was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center. ■

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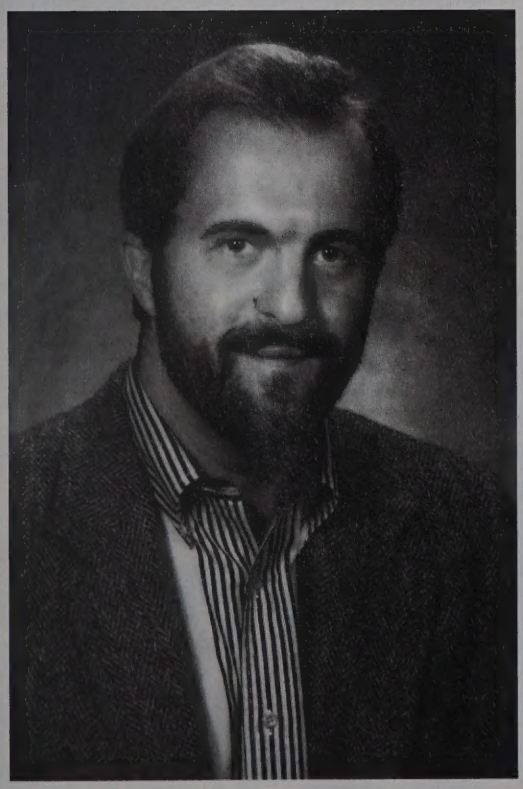

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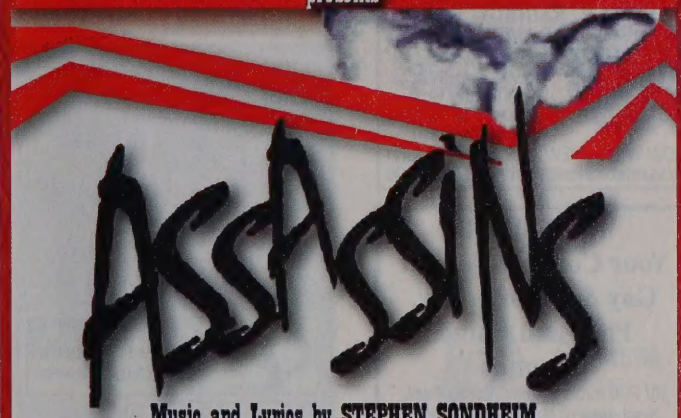

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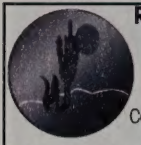

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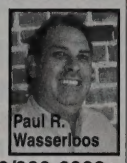

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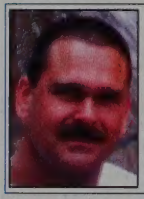

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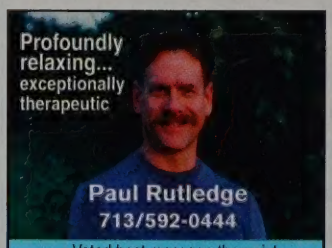

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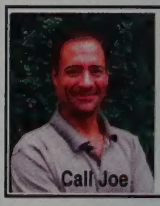

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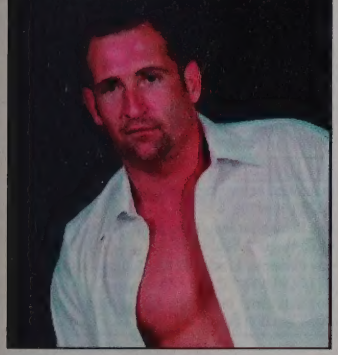

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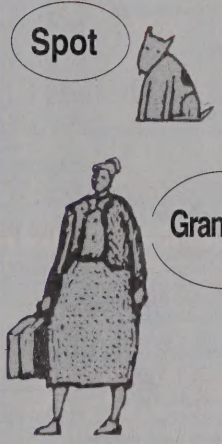

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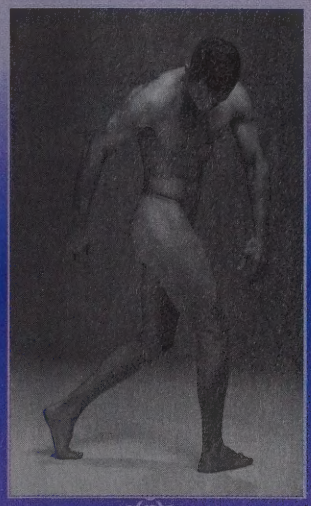

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HOUSTON

AMAZONIA DISCOTHEQUE
The northside Latin club presents Axis Tuesdays, featuring female impersonators and an all-male revue, hosted by DJ William Fuentes, and L Night for women on the second Thursday. 11449 I-45 North • 281/260-9885 • www.amazoniaclub.com.

BARTINI
This brand-new, two-level club near the Westheimer curve features talent night on Thursday and a Saturday variety show. House DJs include Alex T and Marquee Marc, and MCs include Cookie La Cook. 1318 Westheimer • 713/526-2271.

BOCADOS
On Wednesday nights, women pack this Mexican restaurant for dancing and socializing. Sunday brunch starts at 11 a.m. and lasts till 3 in the afternoon. 1312 West Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM
The BRB, Houston's leading country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Great benefit shows often take place on Sunday night. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192.

BRICKS II
This neighborhood joint boasts a jukebox with country music, pool tables, cold draft, and the occasional cowboy hat. Regulars rule at this low-key spot. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

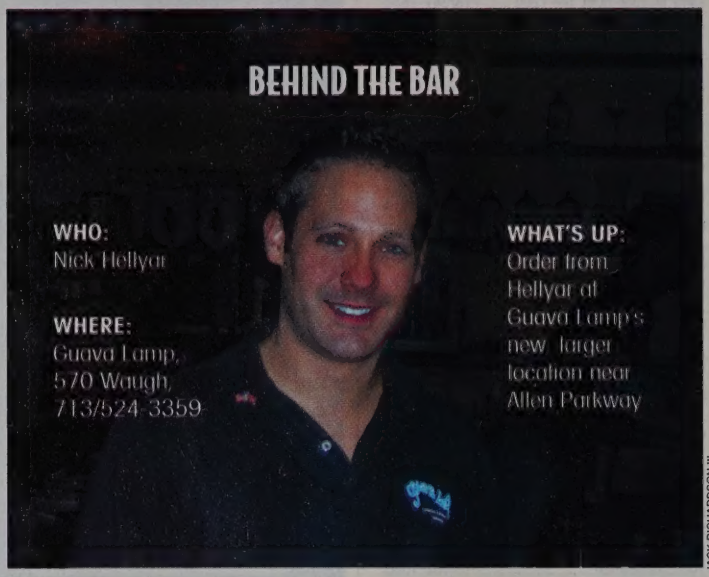
CHANCES/THE NEW BARN/G-SPOT
This three-in-one women's bar provides a place to two-step, rock, or chat. Check out the 9 p.m.–1 a.m. open mic night on Thursdays. Women-fronted bands perform every Saturday night. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB 1415
Comedian Nancy Ford takes over this Montrose spot on Saturday night with The Dyke Show and open mic night. 1415 California • 713/522-7066 (1415), 713/961-2867 (Ford).

CLUB BIG YO
Woman-owned and -operated, the Southwest Houston nightspot operates Thursday–Sunday. Big Yo also presents monthly concerts. 6305 Skyline • 713/953-0268 • www.bigyosplash.com.

CLUB INERGY
A nightlife institution for 12 years, this Southwest club offers an eclectic mix of Latin rhythms, mainstream dance, and hip hop. Sunday is the special show night. 5750 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

EVE
On Friday and Saturday, this spot for women takes over the space above Azteca's Bar & Grill. The guys move in with G Spot on Wednesday and Sunday. 2209 Richmond • 713/523-3837 • www.evesfirst.com.



JACK RICHARDSON III

COUSINS
Drag fans frequent this club in the heart of Montrose for its campy shows on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

DECADES
This casual neighborhood bar attracts a devoted crowd of regulars. It hosts a Monday pool tournament and Wednesday dart tournament and offers free pool on Friday. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

EJ's
Located on the western front of Montrose, EJ's retains the charm of a colorful, local hangout. Night shows, including community benefits, pack the stage. The upstairs martini bar offers a quiet retreat. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071 • www.ejsbar.com.

G-SPOT
George Smith and his Icon Media pack the spot above Azteca's (known as Eve on Friday and Saturday) for the new Wet Wednesday hip-hop night and again on Sunday. 2209 Richmond.

GUAVA LAMP
The club left Shepherd Plaza and recently reopened with a larger space near Allen Parkway. Guava Lamp presents karaoke nights on Sunday and Wednesday andoffers a free happy hour buffet on Friday. 570 Waugh • 713/524-3359.

HOUSE OF FINESSE
At her private-events facility near the Texas Southern University campus, Deidre Sam hosts socials for women on the first Thursday of the month and for men on the second Wednesday as well as special events. 2912 Wentworth • 713/522-6074 • www.houseoffinesse.com.

JR's/SANTA FE
The features at this Montrose standard include pool tables, go-go boys, and karaoke. Kofi, named best drag queen in the 2004 Gayest & Greatest OutSmart reader poll, hosts popular shows Wednesday thru Sunday. 808 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

KEYS WEST
Selected best piano bar in the Gayest & Greatest poll, this nightspot features regular performers and guest entertainers. The two-level deck provides a knockout skyline view. 817 West Dallas • 713/571-7870 • www.keyswest.com.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE
Located next to Club Inergy, this Wednesday–Saturday spot has a 15-ft. video screen, dance floor, and pool tables. DJ Kenny Jammz hosts karaoke night on Wednesday. 5742 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7472.

MARY'S
One of the oldest gay clubs in Houston, this is a legendary nightspot, even though not as notorious as in days past. Mary's is the site of numerous community fundraisers. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

METEOR
Weekly evenings at this chic Montrose video bar include Musical Theatre Night on Monday, Drag Queen Bingo on Tuesday, and Professional Women's Happy Hour on the first and third Wednesday. 2306 Genessee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorhouston.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST
The neighborhood club has become a piano bar. A regular roster of pianists includes Phil Hooper, and the club books talented keyboardists from out of town. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

MO MONG
Every Wednesday night, the guys and gals show up at this Vietnamese restaurant in droves to enjoy the martini specials. 1201 Westheimer #B • 713/524-5664.

MONTROSE DINER
The new 24-hour eatery now hosts a GLBT night on alternate Tuesdays, presented by the Houston

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GLBT Community Center. In May, Houston Transgender Life Connection began hosting the weekly Thursday at the diner. 1111 Westheimer • 713/520-8281 • www.montrosediner.com.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Great-looking male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific • 713/529-7488.

PRIVÉ

The patio at this second-floor spot overlooks the lively Westheimer/Montrose intersection. The mixed crowd includes smartly dressed gays as well as non-gays. 910 Westheimer • 713/522-2542.

RAINBOW ROOM

Every Thursday, Heather Moon hosts Karaoke Night at this north Houston club. DJ Kenny supplies music on Friday and Saturday. The club has begun presenting live music. 527 Barren Springs • 281/872-0215 • www.therainbowroombar.com.

RICH'S HOUSTON

After a hiatus as a nongay music venue, Rich's has returned as the dance club you knew. The refurbished Rich's features a Martin Audio sound system from London, billed as first of its kind in the southern United States. 2401 San Jacinto • 713/759-9606 • www.richs-houston.com.

RIPCORD

OutSmart readers named this spot the best place to show off your leather in the Gayest & Greatest poll. Inside the bar, the Black Hawk Leather Shop sells treasures for the leather/levi/uniform crowd. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.theripcord.com.

611 CLUB

On Friday and Saturday nights, this neighborhood spot offers great buffet dinners. Features include a beautiful garden-style patio. 611 Hyde Park • 713/526-7070.

THE SOCIAL

DJ and promoter Gracie Chavez hosts Les Femmes du Nuit, a female DJ and vocalist night, on the third Thursday at the Heights nightspot. She reports that the crowd includes a growing contingent of GLBT folk. 3730 Washington • 713/426-5585 • www.thesocialinfo.com.

SOUTH BEACH

The potent EAW Avalon Series Sound System keeps the shirtless boys dancing the night away. In the Gayest & Greatest poll, OutSmart readers named this spot the best club after 2 a.m. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SOBE (7623) • www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club near downtown appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 5219 Washington • 713/862-0203.

XCAPE

Lyrica Andrews hosts Luscious Ladies Nite on Wednesdays, featuring female go-go dancers and no cover for gals. On Fridays and Saturdays, there is no cover all night. 8101 Airport Blvd. • 713/454-0775.

NOTE: Club Rainbow and Mela's Tejano Country recently closed.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

The Conroe club has packed up and moved south to a new home near The Woodlands. The Spring location still features the Wall of Fame and the famous saddle from the old watering hole. • 24704 I-45 North, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com.

Galveston

GARZA'S KON TIKI

OutSmart readers voted this Strand spot the best club for dancing in the latest Gayest & Greatest poll. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, the club hosts popular drag shows with the Muscle Action dancers. 315 Tremont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

Eldridge Langlinais recently announced plans to close his Paradise Guest House soon after he opened this club in the old 3rd Coast Beach Bar location. The club and deck offer a great beach view. 9th and Seawall Blvd. • 409/621-1808.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A neighborhood bar, the Island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The private patio includes a swimming pool. On Saturday and Sunday nights, the Ladies of Lafitte show takes the stage. 2501 Avenue Q (at 25th) • 409/765-9092.

3RD COAST BEACH BAR

OutSmart readers voted this Seawall spot the Island bar with the best happy hour in our Gayest & Greatest poll. Thursday is karaoke night. 3rd Coast presents cabaret/variety shows on Friday and Saturday nights. 31st and Seawall Blvd. • 409/765-6911 • www.3rdcoastbar.com.

THE TREMONT HOUSE

Smart Island visitors stop by the atrium bar in the Strand district hotel to hear Oma Galloway play. From our July 2003 issue: "Galloway doesn't merely tickle the ivories. He performs." 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row • 409/763-0300.

UNDERCURRENT

Marvin Grenier and Keith Curry have moved their club from Seawall to downtown. The multi-level, 15,000-square-foot space includes two bars with dance floors, a nonsmoking lounge, a game room, and Curry's art studio. 2409 Market • 409/750-8571 • www.undercurrentgalveston.com.

Beaumont

THE COPA

The hangout for Lamar University students, this two-story dance club has pool tables, a spacious stage, and a staircase that would make Norma Desmond green with envy. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4206.

CHRIS' CROCKETT STREET PUB

This club (formerly just Crockett Stree Pub) has new owners, Chris and Sybil, and a slightly new name. Free pool and Man Watch on Saturday night are just some of the features here. 497 Crockett • 409/835-4243 • www.GayBeaumont.com.

HOOLIGAN'S

Though primarily a women's bar, this just-opened club is open to all. Features include karaoke night on Wednesday and frequent live music, especially on Friday & Saturday. 6025 Martin Luther King • 409/832-0808.

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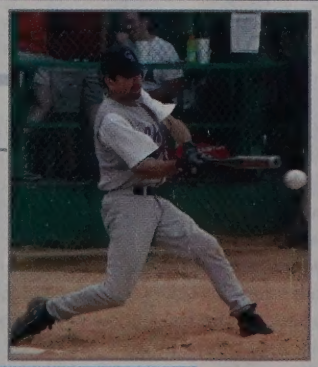
Recent events on website:

- Montrose Softball League
- Bering Omega Community Service Events
- Bunnies on the Bayou & Jungle 13
- The Diana Foundation Events
- GMCH & HRC Events
- Art Car Parade
- Pride Parade & Related Events

...and many other events!



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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Starting off the month with Mercury, planet of thinking and document signing, continuing her retrograde track, we are rushing but seem to be getting nowhere fast. This should be better after the 20th. So wait until then before you begin any new projects. And yes, this includes closing on houses or purchasing a new car. • Now that Saturn, planet of responsibility, goal setting, and focus, has entered Leo, there has been a shift in motivation toward more ego-centeredness. This may cause people to feel inadequate, less than others, or very demanding. It can also spur people to make new plans and get more centered on the things that are most important to them. • Along with Saturn in Leo, a persistent sign, Mars, is in Taurus, and Neptune is in Aquarius. Both are hardheaded signs. Expect people to take positions and resist change with all their might. • Good days for fun and games are August 6, 7, 13, 14, 17, 30, and 31. Days to lay low and call in sick to work are August 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 25, 26, and 28. The Sun begins the month in Leo and enters Virgo on the 22nd. Mercury hangs out in Leo for the whole month, retrograding. Venus is neat and tidy in Virgo and seeks relationship as she enters Libra on the 16th. Mars is pushing his way through Taurus, and Jupiter is finishing his journey in Libra. Saturn remains in Leo, as does Uranus in Pisces, Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Sagittarius.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). You are certainly being urged to be creative this month, but there has to be some goal or plan associated with the investment in any imaginative endeavor. If you have children, they may be giving you some problems by not being responsible, so you end up having to play the heavy. You are ready to spend money this month, so leave that plastic at home. Your needs and desires are ruling you. Spend some time with your partner, traveling, having an adventure, or getting away from the routines.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). Your interests are split between self-oriented activities, home-based projects, and work. You may have some difficult choices, especially on the 2nd, 8th, 13th, 25th, 26th, and 28th, among these three areas. Currently, you are in a strong nesting mode and are trying to make your home and emotional-security base as solid as possible. There is a lot of cleaning up going on at your house. You are feeling pressure from work to make some decisions about which direction you want to go in. Your temper is especially short this month, so keep clear of others and don't let your tempera-ment get the best of you.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). With your ruling planet, Mercury, still retrograde, you are reviewing all of the day-to-day activities in your life. There is probably plenty to clean up—catching up on filing, following up on old e-mails, and just getting everything in its place. You are a bit restless for the first 12 days of the month. Personal relationships may have an edge on them. Make sure you have plenty of freedom and personal space. As the month ends, you are drawn more to home and family affairs.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You are ready for a rest-and-retreat month. You are much more contemplative and introspective than usual. And you will find that you are more sensitive and may over-react to people and situations. Be selective about your company and activities that you engage in. You will want more time to yourself. Relationships can be rather taxing near the end of the month. Breaking your routines can help with anything that makes you feel trapped.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). This month you are focused on your financial condition. This is really the start of a longer trend for the next two years. But for this month, you are working on getting a handle on outstanding bills and planning for future investments. Normally, you are a generous person, especially with family or those who you consider family, but they may find that you are being a bit stingy. You are interested in restarting your social life with new friends and new people all around.

LEO (July 23–August 22). This is your month to shine. With this yearly cycle, you are looking at past accomplishments and looking forward to what you are going to be doing next year. There is a bit of a reserved aspect to your nature this year. You are a bit more conservative and reserved. Everything in your life is being re-evaluated. You are considering whether you are going to keep things as they are, fix the things that aren't working, or if they aren't fixable, replace them. This will have a profound impact on your relationships. This will be a time of renewal of commitment, or you will be going in different directions.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). August continues to be an active and busy month. There are plenty of interests to keep your dance card filled. This month you are considering how you spend your time with social and work organizations. If you are involved in a career association, you will want to take a leadership role, or you may choose to leave the group all together. But the key is that it has to help in your career or work arena. Relationships are still good this month. You don't have to be single unless you want to be.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). You are totally career-focused this month. You want and need recognition in your work. If you feel that you are not getting it in spite of the effort that you are putting forth, you will be looking for other places to show your stuff. This can be a great time to start your own business or to go back to school. If you can just start all of this after the 20th, you will be well on your way. Romance is hot or needs to be. If it's not, you can be fighting with your partner or out looking for someone new. You are not going to be patient this month. It is OK to be a little out of control sometimes.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Fun and play had better be on your agenda. You are ready to get out of town and get away from all the *shoulds, woulds,* and *coulds.* This can also be a great time for creative endeavors and seeing them come to fruition. Career activities are definitely on the back burner, and you are mostly taking care of things you have put off since last April. Friends can be very supportive. If you are trying to focus on work, combine the social with the career, and you will even do better. At the end of the month, security and career responsibilities re-enter the picture.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Shared resources and intimacy in relationships top the menu this month. You are concerned with making your relationships more connected and multi-layered. You are turning over every stone and looking in every box to find this connection. This is important to your sense of security and your whole notion of trust. If you are having financial problems in your relationship, this is a reflection of the lack of trust you have. The arguing reconfirms the connection. Go a bit deeper to see why you are looking under all those rocks.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). Relationships are in the spotlight for you. First, with Mercury retrograde, you are looking at past relationships and reviewing what roads you have traveled in the past. With that done, you are looking for more security or a renewal of commitment with your partner. If you are able to achieve this better connection, there could be some significant changes in your life. This will influence both business and personal relationships. Make sure that you wait until after the 20th to take any definite actions.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). You are continuing to get your workplace cleaned up and everything put into its proper place. You can expect that even the equipment is not working well and may need some cleaning or repair. The work environment is especially important, and you are more sensitive to that area as well. It is a great time to work with diets or new food régimes. You continue to be in an experimental mood. Anything that restricts you in any way should be avoided.

A professional astrologer for 20 years, Lilly Roddy (www.lillyroddy.com) counsels individuals and teaches classes. Her annual forecast: www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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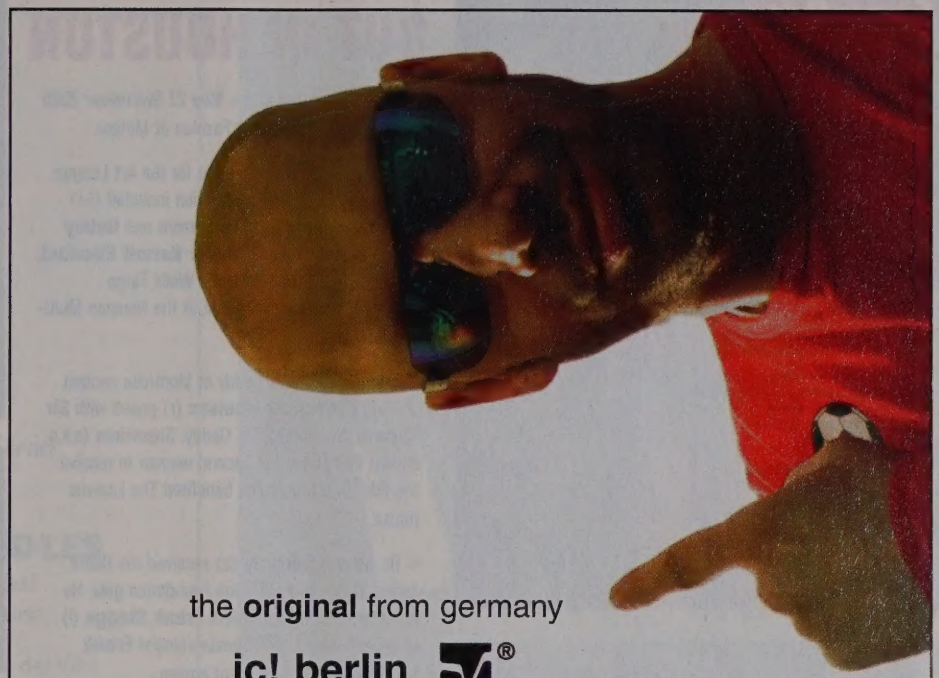

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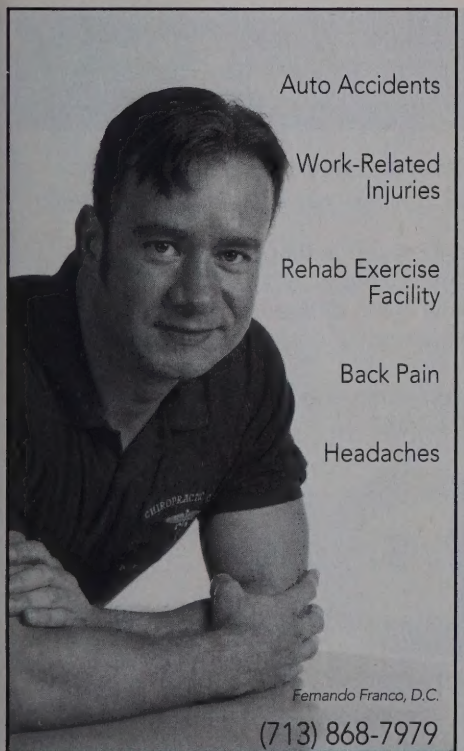

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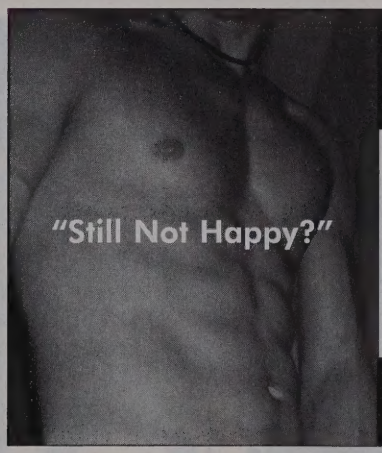

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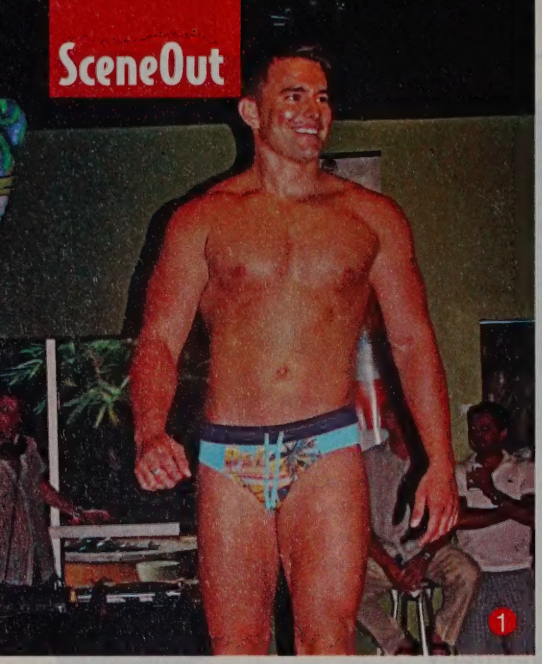

1 A model strutted at the May 22 Swimwear 2005 show presented by M2M Fashion at Meteor.

2 The crowd at the reception for the Art League of Houston Healing Art exhibition included (l-r) **Nick Cavallaro**, **Adrian Brown** and **Bobby May** of Wells Fargo, instructor **Kermit Eisenhut**, and artist **Kenneth Willett**. Wells Fargo sponsored the June 14 event at the Houston Multi-Service Center.

3 After the June 19 Daddy of Montrose contest at Mary's, winner **Shameless** (r) posed with **Sir Korwin**, the 2003-2004 Daddy. Shameless (a.k.a. **Dawn Perna**) is the second woman to receive the title. Event proceeds benefited The Lazarus House.

4 Dr. **Edwin Cordray** (c) received the Diana Award at the May 20 Diana Foundation gala. He posed with Dianas president **Frank Staggs** (l) at Bella Terrazza. KPRC meteorologist **Frank Billingsley** (r) was event emcee..

5 Houston Pride 5K Fun Run finishers included (l-r) **Tim Martinez**, **Karen Jones**, **Carlo Deason**, **Charlie Sellers**, and **Richard Peoples**. The June 18 run, which began at Sam Houston Park downtown, raised funds for AssistHers.

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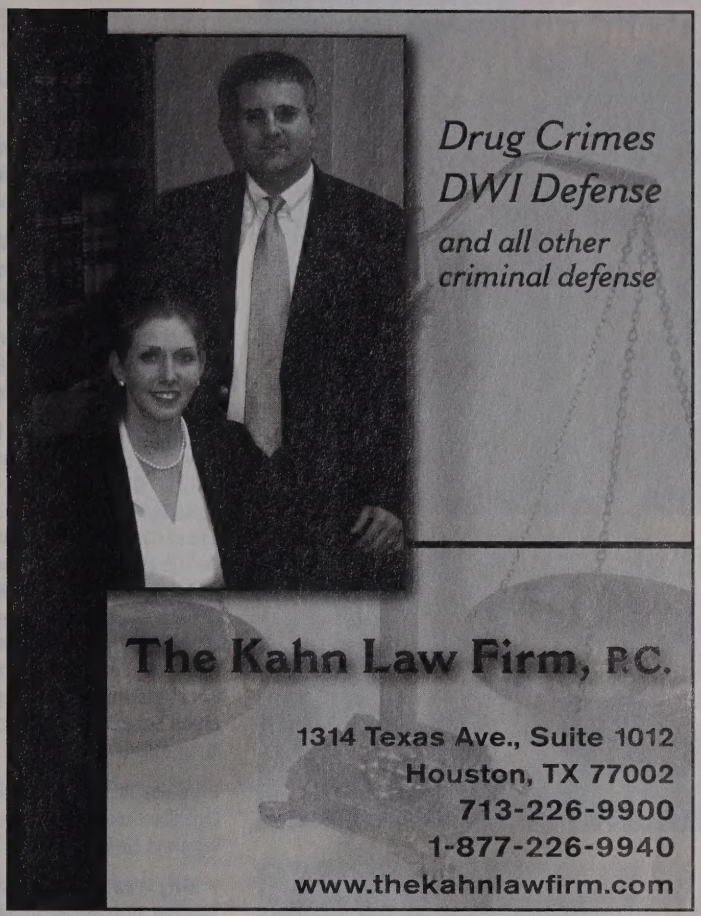

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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 New York drag diva **The Lady Bunny** performed at Guava Lamp on June 17.

2 **Mayor Bill White** (c) and City Councilman **Ronald Green** (r) joined **Ada Edwards** at the May 18 kickoff event for her City Council reelection campaign.

3 **Cathy McMillan** (l-r), **Melisa Frisby**, and **Pat Alford** visited with **Vicki Hopper** at the June 24 Lesbian Health Initiative Rainbow Health Fair at Montrose Clinic.

4 AssistHers, helmed by new president **Renee Tappe** (l), photographed with her partner, **Jan Pasternak**, plans to announce the winner of its logo contest this month.

5 Celebrants in the June 19 Interfaith Pride Service at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church included (l-r) Rev. **Carolyn Mobley**, Resurrection; Rev. **Jeremy Rutledge**, Covenant Church; Rev. **Blake Rider**, Christ Church Cathedral; **C. Burton Bagby**, South Main Baptist; Rev. Dr. **W. Clark Chamberlain**, Presbyterian Church (USA); Rev. **Walter McFadden**, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC); keynote speaker Rev. **Madison T. Shockley, II**, Pilgrim United Church of Christ (Carlsbad, California); **Ron Marr**, Interfaith Alliance for Religious Inclusiveness; Rev. **Janice Ladd**, Resurrection; Rev. **Mona Lopez**, Resurrection;; and Rev. **Dwayne Johnson**, Resurrection.

6 On May 28, **Walter Domingo** pitched during the Lone Star Classic tournament hosted by Montrose Softball League at Slo-Pitch City.

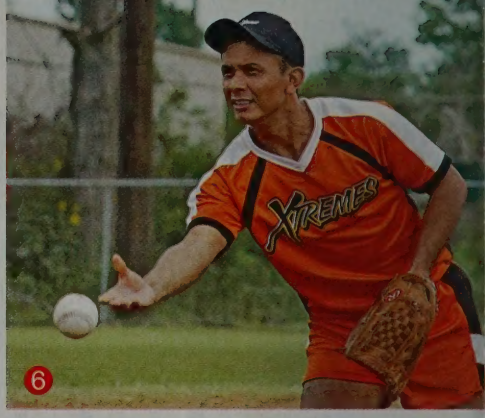
7 **Kitty Wooton** (l-r), **Lynn Sixkiller**, and **Mary Jean Tiernan** attended the June 8 Friends of Pride VIP Wine Tasting at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

8 The crowned royalty at the June 10 HATCH Alternative Prom at Magnolia Ballroom included **Krystina** (seated) and (standing, l-r) **Jeff Jelm**, **Jasmine**, and **Ivan Ramirez**.

9 **Tommy Tune** (l-r), **Chita Rivera**, **John DeLuca**, **John Kander**, and **Rob Marshall** posed after the Theatre Under Stars American Musical Theatre Awards on Apr. 28. The evening at the Hobby Center celebrated the career of Kander and his writing partner, the late **Fred Ebb**. Chicago director Marshall and choreographer DeLuca received special awards.

10 **Abel Rodriguez** (l-r), **Maria Naranjo**, **Elva Garza**, **Shalane Macias**, and **Javier Ruiz** attended the June 24 Baile Internacional at the Communications Workers of America hall. Proceeds benefited the GLOBO scholarship fund and AVES.

More SceneOut, page 96.



1 YVONNE FEECE; 2-3, 5-8 DALTON DEHART; 4 DONNA M. HAWKINS/ASSISTHERS; 9 PETER BAATZ/TUTS

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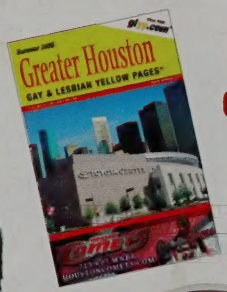

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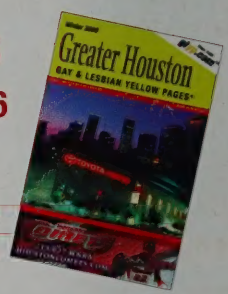

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July 15-August 14, 1996

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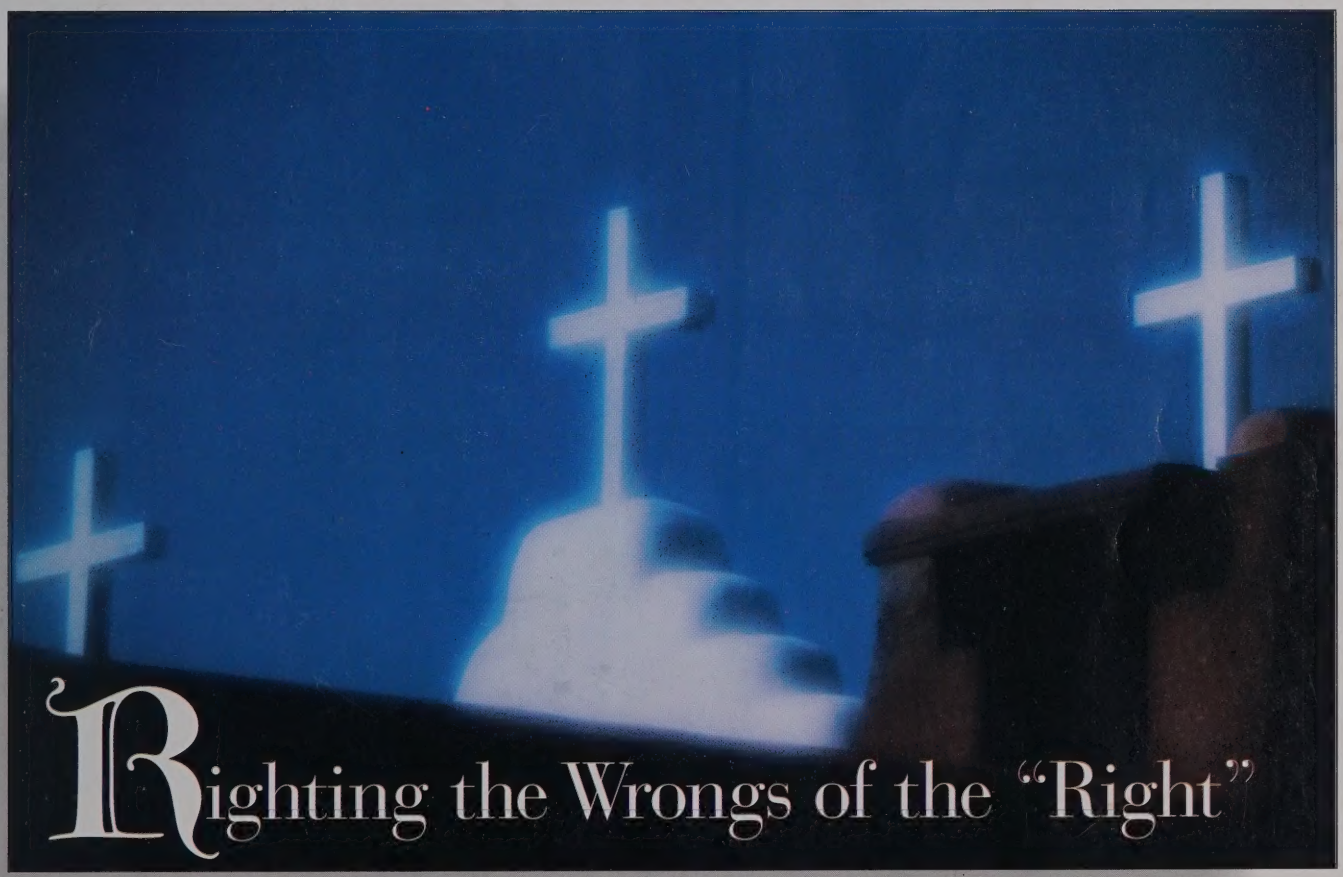

Righting the Wrongs of the "Right"

Spurred to action by messages of intolerance, some Christian churches begin a campaign to counteract the rhetoric of the Religious Right…

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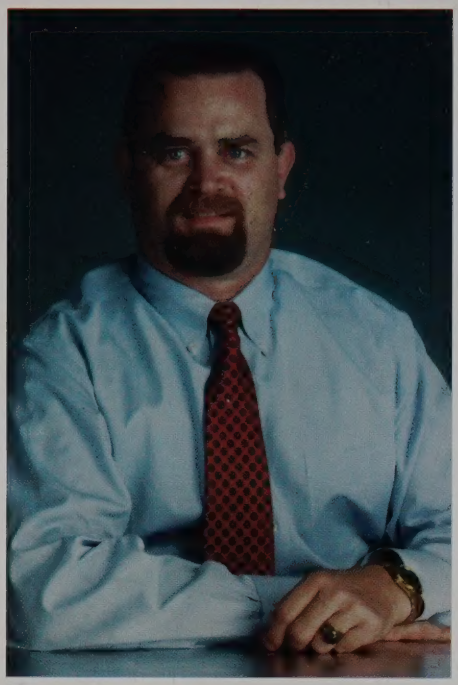

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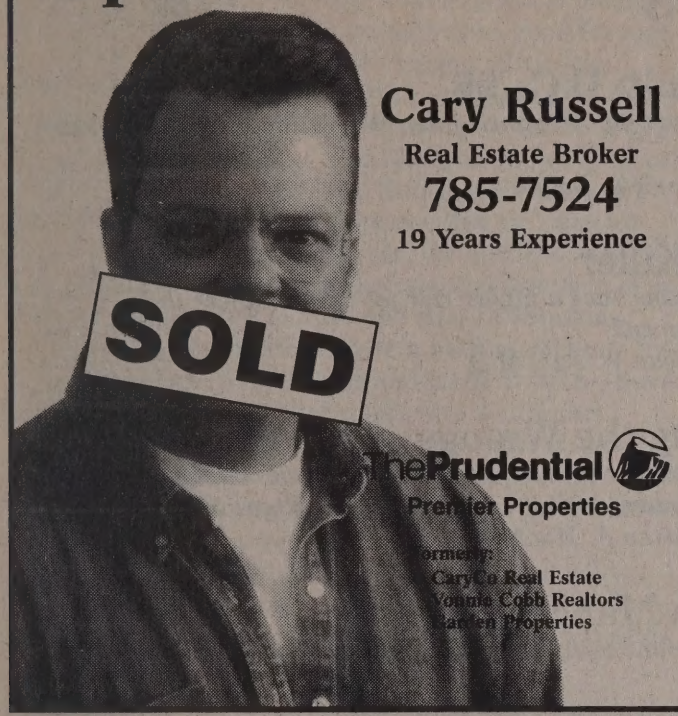

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Volume 3, Issue 6
July 15-August 14, 1996

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Statement of Purpose

OutSmart provides positive information to gay men, lesbians, and their associates to enhance and improve the quality of our lives. Our goal is to build a bridge of communication and understanding between cultural and social communities that are separated by traditions of ignorance and misinformation, thus creating a healthier community for us all.

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MELISSA MANCHESTER PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS

A note from the publisher...

They say change is inevitable. In the past few months *OutSmart* has gone through a few changes of its own.

We're changing the look of our magazine, and we hope you like what we've done so far. Still in progress, our "facelift" is being implemented by Up&Out Graphics, our newly established in-house graphic arts studio with the talented direction of designers Ken Harhai and Blase DiStefano.

A few of our long-term staff members—Nancy Ford, Eric Roland and Earle Dutton—have moved on to other endeavors. *OutSmart* wouldn't have progressed to where it is today, if it hadn't been for their significant contributions. We wish them much success and good fortune in their new projects.

OutSmart isn't the only company going through changes. Recently, Dignity Partner's Inc. reported that shares fell 77 percent after the company, which buys insurance policies from the terminally ill, reported it will no longer purchase policies from people with AIDS.

Dignity's shares fell after the company reported that profits could be effected by new medical developments which seem to be increasing the lifespan of people with AIDS and the HIV virus.

Maintaining our health and wellness is great news for those supporting our community, but it's bad news for some Dignity stockholders. Change happens. Extending time to those with life-threatening illnesses may mean "sudden death" to some viatical companies, culminating in another (pardon the pun) *dying industry*.

Oh well, if you find yourself in the midst of change, just remember that when one door closes, another one opens.

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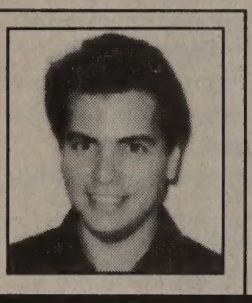

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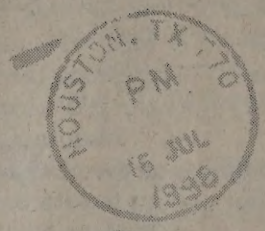

Come Out, Come Out, Whatever Your Age!

I made the decision this Pride Week '96 to be my initial "Coming Out" event, and I wish to thank OutSmart for being here for me with supportive articles and educational experiences.

I realized I had that deep-rooted unconscious claw gripping onto my self-esteem, asking me, "What would family think?"

Well, I don't care anymore what family thinks. I only care about what I think. And I am proud to be part of such a beautiful and supportive community.

For too long, I have been outside the community looking in. Now I wish to become a healthy contribution to our Houston gay and lesbian community.

Out and Proud at 52!

—Charles McDugald, Houston, Texas

Log Cabin Commendable, Republican Party Not

I wonder how long it will take for Dale Carpenter and his comrades to see that the Republican Party simply does not want our kind? The Republican Party, with its clockwork rigidity, has long been condescending to people of color, to women, and downright hateful toward lesbians and gay men. Yes, strides were accomplished in the recent precinct caucuses at the county level. This cannot be attributed to the party in general becoming more tolerant; rather it is indicative of the size of the Houston metropolis. How many chapters of the Log Cabin Republicans are flourishing in Dimebox, Hereford, or Pampa, Texas? When was the last time Republican elected officials attended any gay-related function or fundraiser? I attended several; and the names of Bush, Archer, Stockman, etc., are always conspicuously absent, while those of Richards, Bentsen, Green, Jackson Lee, etc., are frequent in their attendance.

Texas is a conservative state; add the Republican credential to that, and you have a new spelling for intolerance. I commend the Log Cabin's undying attempts, but it is time for them to ally themselves with a party known for the diversity of its members. To continue to give support to a party that has been so vengeful to gays and lesbians is akin to a battered wife renewing her wedding vows.

—Deanna Gideon, Houston, Texas

We Are Family

It is an article of faith, learned from a much wiser "drag queen" than I can ever hope to be, Little Bobbie, who was show director during my days performing at The Exile, that one should always express their gratitude for

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assistance rendered by others. Thus, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the entertainers that performed at Marlene Beago's and my show at Chances on June 28. Due to their efforts, we were able to raise $1,070 to help fund the Red Ribbon Reading Room application for charitable status 501(c)(3), as well as begin the process of resurrecting the Marion Panzer Fund for breast cancer awareness and education and mammography assistance. Additionally, several cartons of books for the shelves of the reading room were received.

Not that I am any less grateful to the others, but I especially want to thank Empress XII Ruby Stone. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to my Reign XII counterpart, King Father XII Marlene Beago, for opening up her club for the court's use. The donation from the LVL-PWA fund, which we were challenged to match, was proof of the concern that Marvin Davis and the organization he founded have for all of us.

Special thanks are due to the other organizations which provided entertainers. The Southern Country cloggers were the high point of the evening. The Texas Gay Rodeo Association's royalty candidates, Javier Luna and Jaime Roberts, also took time from their busy schedules to assist us. Ouisa, the Mother of Montrose, displayed her unique talents to the delight of all. Thank you. As the finale said so well, truly, we are family.

—Jackie Evelyn Thome,
The Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court
of the Single Star, Houston, Texas

From HGLPC regarding DOMA

The cynical attempt by Bob Dole and the Republican Party leadership in Congress to whip up antigay feeling in this country has partially succeeded. The American public supports ENDA (job protection for gays and lesbians) by about 75 percent but does not approve of gay or lesbian marriages by 67 percent.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted last Friday, July 12, by a 342-67 margin to pass DOMA, the infamous Republican-initiated Defense of Marriage Act, which certainly does not defend marriage in any way. It only discriminates against gays and lesbians by defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Then it says heterosexual marriage is the only kind of marriage that can exist. That bill is clearly unconstitutional. The Senate must now consider the matter, and plans are afoot to add ENDA to DOMA as an amendment, and if the Senate Republican leadership still insists on DOMA, they will have to consider ENDA. We have a good chance of getting ENDA attached, but it is by no means a "lead-pipe cinch." Our lobbyists at the Human Rights Campaign are busy now trying to get that done.

No Texas congressman or woman voted against DOMA. Even Sheila Jackson Lee voted "present but not voting." The rest all voted for passage of DOMA. The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus regrets that many of our representatives who are normally with us on other votes did not feel that the political climate allowed them to support us on this vote. With many Southerners, the issues of sodomy and gay marriage are religious issues. We may not believe they are, but that is how the rank-and-file public regards these issues. Texas is still a "Bible Belt" state, and we can be sure that the Republican Party will exploit those sorts of issues to try to gain adherents.

Whatever the Senate does, we must use this issue as an opportunity to educate the public about the issue. Only then will politicians feel they have the political cover to vote with us. Congress has never passed a law which made serious social change without a consensus of the American public. It will be so with us. We need to get busy educating.

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus has a Marriage Task Force, and we welcome inquiries regarding becoming a member of this task force. If you really want to do something, JOIN US NOW IN THIS PROJECT. Anger not directed toward change is misdirected energy. Call 713/521-1000 to add your name to the growing list of people joining or rejoining the caucus.

—Pat Gandy
President, HGLPC
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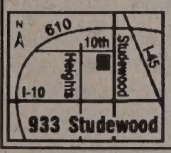

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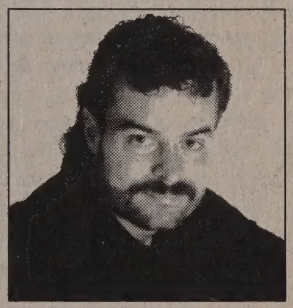
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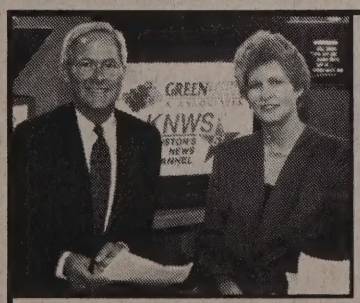

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Calendar of Events

If you are part of a group or have a function that you would like listed in our calendar, please send an announcement by the 1st of the month to: CALENDAR EDITOR, OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon, Houston, TX 77006. Inclusion in the calendar is based upon general interest to our readers, space availability, and the whims of the editorial staff.

July

19 Uncommon Women & Their Uncommon Legacy At LiB's July meeting, **Lory Masters**, member of the Uncommon Legacy board of directors, will review the role of the Legacy Foundation, the grant/scholarship procedure, and the exciting upcoming visit from **Rita Mae Brown**, **Margarethe Cammermeyer**, and others. LiB (Lesbians in Business), 6:30 pm, Innova Bldg., 20 Greenway Plaza, 529-0077.

• ***Summer Stock*** After her long rest in a Boston sanitarium in 1949, **Judy Garland** was summoned by **Gene Kelly** back to Hollywood to co-star in the musical *Summer Stock*. In a way, it represented a regression to her Mickey-Judy days, for the plot involves a troupe of aspiring performers laboring to "put on the show" in the barn of Garland's farm. Judy has one of her very finest moments with a rendition of "Get Happy." 7:30 pm, Rice Cinema, University Blvd. @ Stockton, entrance #8, 527-4853.

19-20 Cafe Maison Live Music, eclectic music with **Donna's Dreams** on Friday, and progressive folk with **Jorge Palomarez** on Saturday. 2089 Westheimer, 528-6750.

19-21 *The Decalogue*, by visionary filmmaker **Krzysztof Kieslowski** (who died in March), has played to sold-out audiences in cities around the world, and this is the first time Houstonians will have the opportunity to see it. This series of 10 hour-long films is inspired by the Ten Commandments but based in modern-day Poland. Each episode is a self-contained story that can be appreciated on its own. Special passes are available for the entire series. Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet, 639-7300.

20 Bastille Day, Krewe of Olympus' first fundraiser for Ball XXVII. $10 donation requested (one drink ticket included). Cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, desserts. A portion of the proceeds goes to benefit Omega House and Steven's House. 7-10 pm, 4527 W. Alabama.

• **Star Light/Star Bright**, Renditions of the Universe: the oil paintings of **Donna Kleszcz**. Meet the artist personally and hear her interpretation of the work, from 7-9 pm, Channing Hall, First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin @ Southmore, 526-5200.

• **Toopees Live Music**, jazz with **West 42nd Street**. 8:30-midnight, 1830 W. Alabama, 522-7662.

21 Houston Metropolitan Billiards League meeting to elect officers and vote on party bids, 2 pm, Lazy J, 312 Tuam, 299-8969.

• **Houston Outdoor Group** July social & pool party, "Don't Whop It on the Drape" (to find out what that title means, you'll have to attend the party), 3 pm. Call 526-7688 for location.

24 Buzz Aldrin was one of the two men in July 1969 who made history when they landed on the moon and took that "giant leap for mankind." He's co-authored a fictional saga, *Encounter With Tiber*, that illustrates the beauty and necessity of space exploration. Meet him at 8:30 pm, Border's Books, 9633A Westheimer, 782-6066.

24&31 Finally, a reason to get up on Wednesdays! Greenway 3 and River Oaks 3 theaters now offer matinees around noon on Wednesdays (the first show is discounted). So get out of bed, brush your teeth, and treat yourself to the finest films in town. They'll make the popcorn. It'll be like a party. (And don't forget the ***Rocky Horror Picture Show*** every Saturday at midnight at River Oaks 3.) Call River Oaks at 524-2175 and Greenway at 626-0402 for more info.

25 Sapphire, the poet and performance artist, comes to Houston to read from her novel *Push*, which has earned praise from critics and readers alike. The 7 pm reading, which is free and open to the public, will take place at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (just off North Main St.), 223-8346.

• **Gay & Lesbian Singles** are invited to the Houston Press Romance Event. All beer, wine, and vintage ports will be $1 off for the evening, and coffee and tea specials promise to make this a festive event. Frozen drink specials will help keep everybody cool! Complimentary gourmet pizzas will also be served. 7 pm till closing, Cafe Maison Coffee Roastery & Espresso Bar, 2089 Westheimer, 528-6750.

Sapphire: The Author of *Push* Reads to Readers

BECKET LOGAN

Sapphire, the poet and performance artist, comes to Houston to read from her first novel *Push*. *Push* is the first-person narrative of Claireece "Precious" Jones, a black street girl who at 16 is still in junior high, unable to read and write, and pregnant again by her father. Precious is huge—well over 200 pounds and nearly six feet tall—a figure of fury, muted desire, and resignation. Moved to an alternative school, she encounters a young black teacher hell-bent to teach—who bullies, cajoles, and inspires her to learn to read and write, to set down her feelings daily in a journal, and to discover the truth of her life.

According to Sapphire, her book's title encapsulates Precious' story, referring both to the life-giving push of bringing forth a child and to her efforts to make her own way out of Harlem's lowest depth. "To push," she says, "is the opposite of being passive." She also acknowledges her book's debt to the pioneering fiction of **Ralph Ellison** and **Toni Morrison**, and particularly to **Alice Walker**'s *The Color Purple*.

The reading, which takes place at 7 pm on Thursday, July 25, at DiverseWorks, is co-sponsored by the independent Houston bookstores Brazos, Crossroads Market Bookstore & Cafe, Inklings, and Nia Gallery and Bookshop. It is free and open to the public. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (just off North Main St.), 223-8346.

26 **How to Use Your Health Insurance**, a free seminar for persons with HIV, led by attorney **Mitchell Katine**, 6-8 pm, ONCOL Medical Associates, 4140 Southwest Freeway, 4th floor, RSVP: 961-7100.

26-27 **Cafe Maison Live Music**, eclectic music with **Girls With Guitars** on Friday, and even more eclectic music with **Johnny Barnett** on Saturday. 2089 Westheimer, 528-6750.

• **Toopees Live Music**, jazz/blues with **Rainelda** on Friday, and folk/jazz with **Donna's Dreams** on Saturday. 8:30-midnight, 1830 W. Alabama, 522-7662.

28 **21st Annual Garden Party**—"The Hookers Ball," 3-7 pm, Heaven, 810 Pacific @ Grant. Tickets & T-shirts on sale at Basic Brothers. For info, call Elmer @ 932-9959.

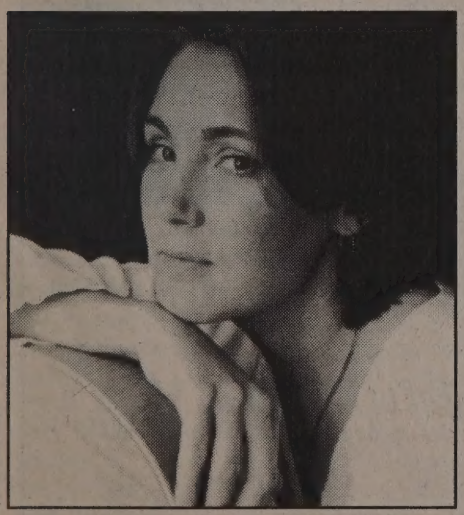
August

1 **Lobo Book Shop** ribbon-cutting ceremony, 12 noon, at the new location at 3939-S Montrose Blvd. in the Montrose Commons. Refreshments and door prize. 522-5156.

3 **Rummage Sale** AIDS Housing Coalition Houston hosts a huge Rummage-A-Rama Sale, 8 am, 117 Tuam Ave. *To donate furniture, appliances, lamps, tables, kitchen goods, stereo equipment, TVs, Christmas gadgets, collectibles, knick-knacks, sports equipment, furnishings, & anything that still works & will sell quickly (sorry, no used mattresses), call 902-2231 or 521-1613.*

• **Toopees Live Music**, blues/rock with **Lesli Wood**. 8:30-midnight, 1830 W. Alabama, 522-7662.

4 **Family Day** Bring the whole family and have fun at the Museum of Fine Arts Family Days! Participate in different activities with new themes each Sunday. Take a discovery tour; watch performers; hear storytellers; create your own art to take home. No reservations necessary, just drop by! Family programs are free with regular museum admission. 12:15-4 pm, Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet, 639-7300.



JANA BIRCHUM

Austin singer/songwriter Diana Jones redefines the "lesbian folksinger" boundaries at Ovations, August 14.

7 **Six Gay Women** discuss their lives and loves on *Late Date With Sari*. Among the participants will be two New York City police officers, who have been together for 12 years and are founding members of the Gay Officers Action League (G.O.A.L.), and **Judy Hill Nelson**, author of *Choices* who sued **Martina Navratilova** for palimony upon the breakup of their 7½-year relationship. LIFETIME Television, 11:30-midnight.

14 **Diana Jones** This Austin singer/songwriter's new CD, *Imagine Me*, is garnering excellent reviews across the country. See her in person, 8:30 pm, Ovations, 2536-B Times Blvd., 522-2204.

15 **Toopees Singles Night**, for lesbian & gay singles. Music, 6-9 pm, 1830 W. Alabama, 522-7662.

Olympics Alternative:

Joan Collins Goes the Distance & Fuels the Flame When LIFETIME Presents "The Joan Collins Minithon"

SVEN ARNSTEIN

For 17 consecutive nights on LIFETIME Television, the Golden Globe-winning **Joan Collins** heats things up when she hosts the presentation of 26 entertaining miniseries, including *Danielle Steel's Jewels*, *The Two Mrs. Greenvilles*, *Diana: Her True Story*, and *Love, Honor & Obey: Mafia Marriage*.

Collins will also offer personal asides and production notes on each project, including *Monte Carlo*, in which she stars.

Known mainly for her starring role as Alexis Carrington in the hugely successful dramatic series *Dynasty*, Collins will be reunited with celebrated costume designer **Nolan Miller**. Miller, whose creations for Collins and others on *Dynasty* earned him awards and acclaim, has designed 17 gowns that Collins will unveil each evening. In addition, Collins will be wearing a selection of diamonds from internationally renowned jeweler **Harry Winston** and unique jewelry from Greek jeweler **Ilias Lalaounis**.

The first night—Friday, July 19, 9 pm—begins with **Victoria Principal** in *The Burden of Proof*, and the last night—Sunday, August 4, 6 pm—ends with **Elliot Gould** in *Bloodlines: Murder in the Family*.

Theater

Andrew Lloyd Webber—Music of the Night showcases the British composer's most memorable songs and contains newly arranged theatre music and orchestral suites from a 27-year career that includes *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Cats*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. The show also features extended selections from *Sunset Boulevard*. The headliner is Grammy Award-winning **Melissa Manchester**, who is backed by an ensemble of 12 Broadway singers and dancers who perform with a full 32-piece on-stage orchestra. July 23-28, Brown Theater, Wortham Center, 629-3700.

Beehive, Theatre Under the Stars' free musical celebration of the '60s. Through July 27, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park, 622-1626.

Cabaret. August 1-18, The Grand 1894 Opera House, Galveston, 1-800/54-SHOWS.

Camelot. July 24-August 10, Mary Moody Northen Amphitheatre, Galveston, 1-800/54-SHOWS.

David, the Best Slinger in the West. Through August 3, Rotunda Theater, St. Luke's Methodist Church, 3471 Westheimer @ Edloe, 526-2721.

The Drums of Sweetwater (the world premiere) by local African-American playwright, **Thomas Meloncon**. It's an explosive drama set in 1968 in the Texas panhandle town of Sweetwater. Through August 18, Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd., 524-6706.

The Drunkard was first presented in 1844 at the Boston Museum during the time of the Temperance Movement and has had regular revivals ever since. Held over at Stages Repertory Theatre through July 28, 3201 Allen Parkway, 527-8243.

The Fantasticks. Through August 4, A.D. Players, Grace Theater, 2710 W. Alabama, 526-2721.

Fat Man Productions, a nonprofit theatrical company, announces its first annual playwrighting competition to select a full-length produceable play for its upcoming season. **Anthony E.P. Hill**, founder, says he will entertain both two- and three-act entries, comedy or drama, with no more than six characters. Minimal sets, costumes,

props, and technical effects, please. No restrictions on subject matter, but it should be tastefully treated. *Submission deadline: September 1, 1996.* For more information, call 523-1530.

Fiddler on the Roof. Through August 17, Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury, 467-4497.

The Frog Prince (a children's play). Through August 10, Theatre Southwest, 3750 South Gessner, 661-9505.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. Through August 18, Centre Stage Theatre Company, Kingwood Performing Arts Center, 806 Russell Palmer Dr., Kingwood, 358-5575.

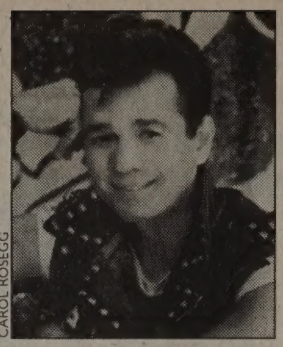
The Goodbye People, an endearing fantasy about people who are convinced they can open a successful hot dog stand at Coney Island in the middle of winter. Through August 25, Actors Theatre, 2506 South Blvd., 529-6606.

Grease! takes place in a time when hot-rod-lovin' boys in black-leather jackets wore greasy coifs, and boy-crazy girls wore beehive hairdos, white bobby socks, and skin-tight pedal pushers. A **Tommy Tune** production starring **Joe Piscopo**, **Mackenzie Phillips**, and **Adrian Zmed**. August 6-11, Brown Theater, Wortham Center, 629-3700.

The Nerd. Through July 28, Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave., 228-8421.

Poor Super Man. Adults only. Through August 4, Theatre LaB, 1706 Alamo (off the 200 block of Houston Ave.), 868-7516.

The Seven Deadly Virtues, a divine comedy spiced with musical deviltry. Proceeds benefit the Bering Support Network, which offers counseling and other resources for people touched by HIV/AIDS. August 2-4 (opening night gala August 1), Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway, 526-5846.



CAROL ROSEGG

Adrian Zmed plays super-cool Danny Zuko in Grease! at Wortham Center, August 6-11.

Steak! The Musical is a country and western musical about cattle-rustling vegetarians! Through August 17, The Actors Workshop, 1009 Chartres @ Lamar, 236-1844.

The Twilight of the Golds by **Jonathan Tolins** (the Houston premiere). David is gay; if his parents had known before he was born, would he be here today? Through August 10, New Heights Theatre, 339 W. 19th, 869-8927.

Two by Two. Through August 10, Theatre Southwest, 3750 South Gessner, 661-9505.

Radio & TV

After Hours: (Radio) Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with **Jimmy Caper**. KPFT 90.1 FM.

Lesbian & Gay Voices: (Radio) Thursdays, 9-11 pm. Features news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM.

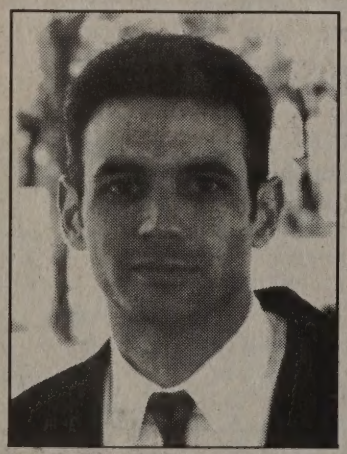
AIDS Talk Houston: (TV) Access Houston Community Television (AHCT); showtimes are listed in local television guides under AHCT channels (Warner: Ch. 17, TCI: Ch. 41, Phonoscope: Ch. 72, Optel: Ch. 07).

Montrose 77006 (TV) is a fresh mix of gay/lesbian comedy, politics, and on-the-scene reports of activities in the Montrose area. 902-2231 (24-hr. voice mail) for info or to advertise your area group activity, organization, or business. Access Houston Community Television (AHCT); showtimes are listed in local television guides under AHCT channels (Warner: Ch. 17, TCI: Ch. 41, Phonoscope: Ch. 72, Optel: Ch. 07).

Art

The Art League of Houston is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday & Friday from 1-4 pm at the Art League, 1953 Montrose. Among other media, the course offers lessons in painting, printmaking, and ceramics on a rotating basis. For information, call 523-9530.

Eh, what's up, doc? **Chuck Jones Retrospective** makes it debut here in Houston at Fine Toon Cartoon Art Gallery! This tribute to the



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legendary animator highlights the director's tremendous achievements outside of Warner Bros.' Looney Tunes characters, including more than 50 cels, original production drawings, and rare preliminary sketches spanning the animator's 60-plus-year career. There will be classic Looney Tunes characters on display, too, "because a Chuck Jones exhibit," points out gallery owner **Gregg Medlyn**, "would be daffy without them." Through August 18, Fine Toon Cartoon Art Gallery, 2427 Bissonnet, 522-6499.

"Introducing" is a group exhibition of fine arts and sculpture by **Patrick Dean** and others. Through August 13, Martin's Gallery, 1641 Westheimer, 523-6925.

"Introductions '96" is an exhibition of photographs by **Tom Baril** (floral still life, cityscapes, seascapes) and **Adriene K. Veninger** (trees, leaves, bones). Baril was **Robert Mapplethorpe**'s printer for many years. Through August 10, John Cleary Gallery, 2635 Colquitt, 524-5070.

"Tools for Thought" (glass, wood, and metal sculpture) by **Neil Harshfield**. Through August 17, James Gallery, 307 Sul Ross, 523-6925.

"Vessels" (mixed media on paper) by **Helga Thomson**. Through August 30, Sicardi-Sanders Gallery, 2623 Kipling, 942-7035.

Classes & Seminars

Aging Without the Aches, Easily! is a free presentation by **Norri J. Collier**, D.C., based on the most current medical research and will provide information on (1) how not to be one of the 140,000 people who die each year because of mistakes/misuse of prescription medications, (2) wellness and preventive care, (3) refuting the idea that aches are a natural part of the aging process and how to age ache-free, (4) how to prevent infections, nerve damage, fatigue, and immune system weakness, (5) how to avoid common mistakes like taking Tylenol daily and ignoring aches and pains "because they're normal." Tuesdays, 6:15-7:30 pm, 5433 Westheimer @ Yorktown, Ste. 1111, 623-6305.

The Art League of Houston is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday & Friday from 1-4 pm at the Art League, 1953 Montrose. Among other media, the course offers lessons in painting, printmaking, and ceramics on a rotating basis. For information, call 523-9530.

Holistic Expo Events include a discussion about the immune system and how to enhance it. Saturday/Sunday, August 3-4, 9-5 each day, $20 for both days, University of Houston Hilton Hotel, 522-5084.

How to Use Your Health Insurance, a free seminar for persons with HIV, led by attorney **Mitchell Katine**, Friday, July 26, 6-8 pm, ONCOL Medical Associates, 4140 Southwest Freeway, 4th floor, RSVP: 961-7100.

Love, Lust, & Intimacy explores the connection between relationships, intimacy, & self-esteem issues, 4th Tuesday of each month, 7-9 pm, AFH office, 3202 Weslayan, 623-6796.

Multivitamin Seminar Free seminar with a shelf-full of information on the benefits and varieties of vitamins to make multivitamin selection simpler. Tuesday, July 23, 8:30-9:30 am, A Moveable Feast, 2202 W. Alabama, 528-3585.

Rainbow Ranglers, a gay country & western dance club, teaches beginning level dance every Thursday at 8:30 pm and advanced level dance every Wednesday at 8 pm at the Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos. Dance classes are free & open to the public. Call 880-0670 for info.

Sex, Toys, & Videotape explores the diversity of ways to enjoy safer sex, 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7-9 pm, AFH office, 3202 Weslayan, 623-6796.

Southern Country Houston provides country and western dance lessons, exhibitions, and charity events to benefit service organizations. Free dance lessons are offered every Tuesday, 8-10pm, at The Ranch, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway. Call 648-9340 or write to P.O. Box 1502, Houston, TX 77252-1502.

Strategies for Personal Success is a free seminar presented by **Lynn S. Marks**, who will guide you to attract, create, and achieve the personal and professional life you want, Thursday, July 18, 5:30 pm, BookTronics, 5370 Westheimer, 626-4000.

It's time for a change
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JOAN MARCUS

The ensemble of Andrew Lloyd Webber–Music of the Night *with headliner Melissa Manchester (not pictured) will perform at Wortham Center, July 23-28.*

That Dam Debate: Safer Sex for Lesbians, a seminar presented by **Nancy Ford** and sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston, the last Thursday of each month, 9:30 pm, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway, 666-3464.

Community

AIDS Equity League, a nonprofit organization dedicated to insuring equitable treatment of the gay and lesbian community in local HIV/AIDS decision-making. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 524-9966.

Anti-Homophobia Alliance, an organization dedicated to ending the irrational fear and general dislike of gay and lesbian people, harnesses support from a cross-section of the gay and non-gay population through the use of dialogue, educational workshops, and advertising; and by using effective activism based on non-violence, intelligence, and common sense. For more information, call 526-8822.

EXXON Association of Gay & Lesbian Employees (EGLE) meets monthly at the Montrose Library to discuss workplace issues, empowerment, social events, etc. For more information, please call 522-6212.

Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (GHGLCC) July networking mixer, July 18, 6pm, The Teacher Store, 1001 S. Allen Genoa, 944-2306. August networking mixer, August 15, 6 pm, 4200 Montrose, lobby area, 529-4488.

HIV/AIDS Treatment Mixer, open forum for sharing information, 4th Tuesday of each month, 7-9 pm, 2700 Albany, Ste. 205, 527-8219.

The Homeless Pet Placement League is a nonprofit animal welfare organization that rescues and rehabilitates stray and abandoned cats and dogs. To inquire about volunteering, foster care, or adopting, call 862-PETS.

HOPE Project (HIV Outreach, Prevention, and Education) provides HIV/AIDS information to the African-American community. Board meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month. Contact the HOPE line at 587-6914 for more information.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. 1st Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 3rd floor, 521-1000.

Houston Pride Band provides musical entertainment for the lesbian and gay community. They are seeking musicians of all skill levels and instrumentation. Rehearsals are held at Dignity Houston, 1307 Yale on Wednesdays from 7-9 pm. Contact Russell at 524-0218 or e-mail HousTxBand@aol.com.

Log Cabin Republicans, 4th Monday of each month, 6:30 pm (social), 7 pm (meeting), Renata's, 2006 Lexington, 529-9100.

OutVote, a nonprofit organization dedicated to registering, educating, and motivating our community to vote. For more information, call 520-VOTE or 522-9837.

Pride Committee of Houston, executive meeting (7 pm, 1st Tuesday of each month) and general meeting (6:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of each month), 2700 Albany, 529-6979.

Q-Patrol is dedicated to the prevention of hate crimes against gays and lesbians, patrols the bar areas in Montrose, and is always looking for volunteers. If you have at least one Friday or Saturday night per month, please call 528-SAFE (7233).

Rice GALA (Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association) seeks gay and lesbian alumni of Rice University. Contact Neal Tannahill at 526-6718 for more information.

Texas Human Rights Foundation, a statewide, not-for-profit legal agency, advocates on behalf of the lesbian, gay, and HIV community and publishes the booklet *AIDS and the Law: Know Your Rights*. If you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or HIV status and need legal advice or attorney referral, call their toll-free number, 1-800-828-6417.

Women's Action Coalition (WAC) is an alliance of women committed to direct action on issues affecting the rights of all women, Wednesdays, 7 pm at Toopees. P.O. Box 131148, Houston, TX 77219-1148, voice mail 867-9581.

Health

AIDS Housing Coalition Houston runs the nonprofit TLC House program, a 90-day, gay-positive, emergency house for PWAs in transition. For more information about joining, call 521-1613.

AssistHers tries to help women live as normally as possible while coping with a life-threatening or debilitating illness. Eligible for service are women whose emotional, social, or sexual relationships are primarily with other women who have a debilitating or life-challenging disease, illness, or condition. Assistance may extend to a woman's partner, caregiver, or family. Services are provided regardless of ability to pay, and regardless of age, race, ethnicity, or economic status. P.O. Box 131605, Houston, TX 77219-1605, 552-9445.

AVES (Amigos Volunteers in Education & Services) provides social and healthcare services to HIV-positive individuals. 4126 Southwest Frwy., Ste. 1717, 626-2837 or 1-800-981-2837.

Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI) is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health of lesbians and bisexual women in the Houston area. 1st Tuesday of each month, 7 pm, Inklings, 1619 Kipling, 526-7828.

Milam House is a housing facility for HIV-positive persons who, because of health, social, and/or economic conditions, are unable to provide for their own basic human needs. We are seeking volunteers to help with everything from shift work to administrative and fundraising. If you can help, please contact Dallas at 520-9248 or e-mail us at ahhvlntr@neosoft.com.

Montrose Counseling Center offers numerous counseling groups, including groups for men and women living with HIV, people in recovery, lesbian survivors of cancer, survivors of sexual abuse, people living with chronic pain, lesbian survivors of domestic violence, and many more. For more information, contact *(24 hrs.)* 529-0037.

Next Step is a free confidential program of information and medical testing for persons who are HIV positive. Provided by Montrose Clinic. Call 520-2000 for schedule and to register.

Thomas Street Health Center Council is an elected advocacy group that advise the hospital district on matters concerning Thomas Street AIDS Clinic. Meetings are open to public comment and participation, 2nd Wednesday of each month, 2 pm, 3rd floor conference room, 2015 Thomas St. @ Paschall off N. Main, 521-1613.

Women's Clinic Montrose Clinic is now offering a women's health clinic. Visits include complete examination by gynecologist, lab work, medication, and referral if needed. The fee is $40; however, no one will be turned away. Every Wednesday, 5-8 pm, by appointment only, 520-2000.

Religion & Spirituality

Dignity Houston, dedicated to the welfare of gay/lesbian Catholics and their friends, meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm, 1307 Yale, Suite H, 880-2872.

Kolbe Project is an ecumenical outreach to gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities modeled after the ministry of St. Francis of Assisi. Potluck and community-concern programs, first Thursdays, 7 pm. Healing Service, second Thursdays, 7 pm. Spiritual Direction by appointment; HIV/AIDS hospital chaplaincy. For information, call 522-8182.

Lesbian & Gay Potluck The Lesbian & Gay Unitarian Universalists (LGUU) invite you to bring a dish and join them every 4th Friday of the month, 7 pm, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Crane Fireside Room, 5200 Fannin, 526-5200.

Social

20 Something is a caring, informative, social community for les-bi-gay persons and their friends coming together in a safe and positive atmosphere to share, learn, and build friendships. For more information, contact Carrie, Julie, Daniel, Guy, or Darby at 315-6786 (voice mail).

Females in Search of Trouble (FIST) is a social group of women who explore the S/M, B/D, and fetish lifestyle. Monthly meetings and social events. Write: 7534 Carew, Houston, TX 77074 or call 772-5826.

Gay & Lesbian Health Professionals meets monthly, providing socials, speakers, networking, and practitioner referral line. For information or a referral, call 523-4700.

Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston (GLOBAL) is a social, political, and support group for the university GLB population and its supporters. Everyone is welcome. The group meets weekly on Wednesdays at 4 pm in the University Center. For more information, call Richard Parent at 743-7690.

Heartsong Women's Chorus rehearses at 7 pm on Mondays on the third floor of the First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin @ Southmore. New and former members welcome! Call 947-1488 for information.

Houston Outdoor Group (HOG) is a social group for gay men and lesbians who enjoy the

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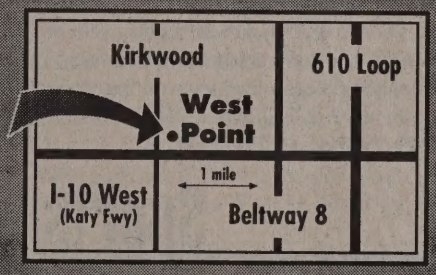

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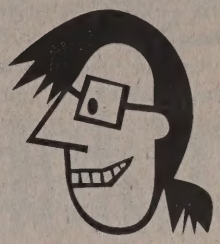

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outdoors. Activities include camping, hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, etc. Day trips, weekend trips (typically a two- to four-hour drive from Houston) and extended trips to places such as Wyoming, Canada, and the Cayman Islands. The general HOG monthly meeting is held the 4th Thursday of every month, 7-9 pm, at the Assistance Fund Bldg., 1116 Jackson Blvd., one block north of Fairview, west of Montrose. Call 526-7688 (KAMP OUT) or write to P.O. Box 980893, Houston, TX 77098.

Houston Women's Festival is now planning for the 1996 festival, which will be held Saturday, September 21, at Garden in the Heights. Contact them at P.O. Box 66604, Houston, TX 77266-6604, 868-1910, e-mail AthenaArt@aol.com.

Lesbian & Gay Potluck The Lesbian & Gay Unitarian Universalists (LGUU) cordially invite you to bring a dish and join them every 4th Friday of the month, 7 pm, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Crane Fireside Room, 5200 Fannin, 526-5200.

Lesbians in Business (LiB), a lesbian empowerment group, promotes lesbians, jobs and businesses. 3rd Friday of each month, 6:30 pm, Innova Bldg., 20 Greenway Plaza, 529-0077.

Lone Star Nudist Group For gay or bisexual men who wish to share nude experiences. Singles and lovers welcome. Monthly meetings. Nude social events, massage group, and out-of-town gatherings. Call 866-8847 for more information.

Minority & White Men Together (MWMT) is a social club made up of black, brown, red, yellow, and white men. We are committed to tearing down the walls of racial misconceptions and stereotypes. Our goal is to reach a better mutual understanding by forging new interracial relationships and friendships through social and political activities. For more information and an invitation to the next Sunday mixer, contact Michael at 867-9511.

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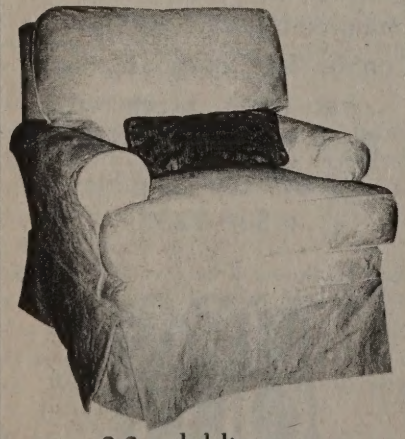

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All hell breaks loose when Cyndi Long and Ronny Barboza meet in The Seven Deadly Virtues *at Stages Repertory Theater, August 1-4.*

Prime Timers Houston promotes social activities for the older gay and bisexual male. Some of the activities they participate in are theater, dining out, movies, potluck dinners, card games, and weekend daytrips. For more information, call 867-3903.

Texas Gay Rodeo Association is a nonprofit organization, with chapters in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston, that promotes and stages an annual rodeo event as well as engaging in fundraising activities throughout the year. For more information on the Houston chapter, write to P.O. Box 130585, Houston, TX 77219-0585 or call 777-1444.

Sports

Houston Tennis Club, an affiliate member of the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Association, welcomes men and women of all ages and skill levels. They meet Wednesdays & Fridays from 7:30-9 pm & Sundays from 9 am-12 noon at Memorial Park Tennis Center. To join, call 875-2891.

Houston Women's Softball League is a nonprofit organization for women who enjoy the sport of softball. For more information, write to P.O. Box 70666, Houston, TX 77270 or call 721-6854.

Team Houston for the Games, Inc. is a nonprofit organization to educate and inform all people about gay/lesbian sports competitions and to encourage participation in the Gay Games and Cultural Festival. The next Gay Games will take place in Amsterdam, August 1-8, 1998. For more information, write to Team Houston, P.O. Box 66405, Houston, TX 77266-6405 or call 935-1060.

Support Groups

AIDS Alliance of the Bay Area, support group for those infected and affected, Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, 17511 El Camino Real, #159, 488-4492.

Astro Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf, general meeting every 2nd Friday of the month, 7:30 pm, Montrosé Clinic, 215 Westheimer, 869-2287 via Texas Relay 1-800-735-2988.

Bisexual Network of Houston (BiNet), Wednesdays, 7 pm, MCCR Church, 1919 Decatur, 861-9149.

Crossroads is a support group for gays and lesbians who are currently in full-time church work, have been in the past, or are pursuing their calling. It is not exclusively for pastors, but is open to chaplains, administrators, musicians, or music-, youth-, and educational-directors. Meets the third Saturday of each month, and there are socials throughout the month. Call 681-9082 for dates, time, and place.

Empowerment for Living, a weekly HIV-positive and -negative support program and potluck supper, Tuesdays, 6 pm, MCCR, 1919 Decatur. For more information, call 861-9149.

Gay Fathers of Houston is a support group of gay men who meet every Monday, 8-9:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh, to discuss problems gay fathers share. For more information or directions, call 861-6181.

Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) meets the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 8 pm at the First Universal Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin @ Southmore. All concerned educators, parents, and anyone interested are encouraged to attend. For more information on this local chapter, please call 942-7002, box 4. The national organization of GLSTN can be reached at 212/727-0135, or e-mail GLSTN@glstn.org.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents support group meets to discuss issues pertaining to today's gay families. If you have children or plan to have children, this support group can help with issues like coming out, ex-spouse problems, step relationships, etc. Meets at MCCR library, 1919 Decatur, the second Tuesday of every month from 7-8:30 pm, 666-8260 or 980-7995.

Living in Process Groups Ongoing mixed group for men and women three Wednesday evenings per month. Ongoing gay men's group three Thursday evenings per month. Call Eric Mayo at Living in Process Southwest for more information, call 622-7250.

Living With HIV Support Group For anyone whose life is touched by HIV. Meetings include a relaxing meditation, information about community resources, and occasional speakers. The group meets Thursdays from 7-9 pm in room 117 at Unity Church of Christianity, 2929 Unity Drive at Hillcroft. For further information, please call 782-4050.

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault is a support group designed to provide a safe, confidential environment for men to talk about their experience and their struggles in society around the issues of male sexual assault. Call Diane Williams at the Houston Area Women's Center, 528-6798, ext. 246, for more information. *All services are free of charge and confidential.*

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG), general meeting with small group discussioins, 1st Sunday of each month, 2 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 Piney Point Rd. PFLAG Houston Helpline: 867-9020.

PROTECT (People Respecting Ourselves Through Establishing Community and Trust), an HIV-negative support group, provides a safe place to share experiences, strengths, and hopes in an effort to remain HIV negative. Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, Bering Church, 1440 Harold. For information, call Marty at 520-7870.

Tau Chi Chapter of Tri Ess is a local support group for heterosexual male crossdressers and their wives or partners. For more information, call Brandi at 409/856-6759.

Texas Association for Transsexual Support (TATS) is a peer support group devoted to serving the emotional, social, and educational needs of transgendered persons, their partners, families, and friends. For more information, call 827-5913 or write to TATS, P.O. Box 142, Bellaire, TX 77401.

Women's Network is a support group for lesbian and bisexual women. 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

Youth

20 Something is a caring, informative, social community for les-bi-gay persons and their friends meeting in a safe and positive atmosphere to share, to learn, and to build friendships with each other. For more information, contact Carrie, Julie, Daniel, Guy, or Darby at 315-6786 (voice mail).

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH) is open to gays and lesbians, age 15-21. Meets Fridays from 7:30-10 pm & Sundays from 6:30-9 pm. Call 942-7002 for location and information.

Wish Lists & Volunteers Needed

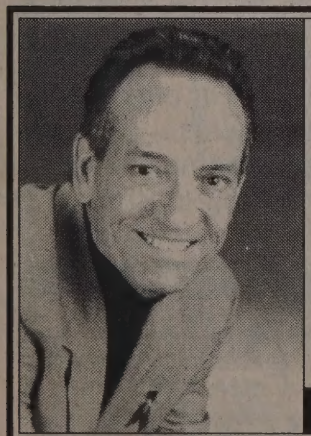
AssistHers tries to help women live as normally as possible while coping with a life-threatening or debilitating illness. Volunteers are trained and supervised in the provision of direct care such as emotional support, meal preparation, shopping, hospital and home visits, pet care, plant and lawn maintenance, transportation, and other assistance. Volunteers work as members of a Care Team; since Care Teams are assigned one client, it is realistic to expect two visits a week from volunteers. 552-9445.

AVES (Amigos Volunteers in Education & Services) volunteer wish list: 1) fluent, or at least functional, in English and Spanish; 2) comfortable discussing sexual matters with total strangers; 3) comfortable with various ethnic and sexual cultures; 4) able and willing to commit at least two hours a week; 5) able to staff the hotline during office hours; and 6) willing to make a long-term (at least six months) commitment. 4126 Southwest Frwy, Ste. 1717, 626-2837 or 1-800-981-2837.

Casa de Esperanza needs clothes, sizes birth to 14; shoes; socks and underwear; children's videos; diapers and diaper wipes; food; art supplies; and toys for the shelter that serves abused and HIV-infected children. P.O. Box 66581, Houston 77266-6581, 529-0639.

Crisis Intervention of Houston needs volunteers for 24-hour crisis-intervention and suicide-prevention hotline that requires 53 hours of training and a commitment of four hours a week; cash contributions for hotline and counseling programs. P.O. Box 130866, Houston 77219, 527-9864.

The Homeless Pet Placement League is a nonprofit animal welfare organization that rescues and rehabilitates stray and abandoned cats and dogs. To inquire about volunteering, foster care, or adopting, call 862-PETS.



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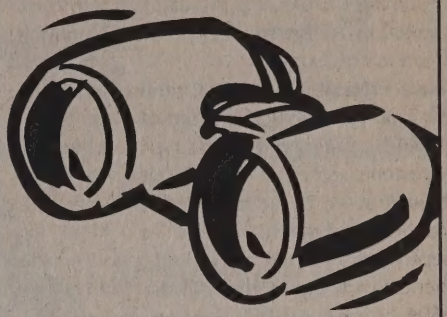

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Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI) works to improve the health of lesbians and bisexual women in the Houston area. Volunteers needed to help with computer work, fundraising, direct health-care services, organizing projects, phone trees, and publicity/advertising. Please call 526-7828 for more information.

Milam House, a residential center for people living with HIV/AIDS, is in need of sincere individuals to offer friendship and support. In the safe, comfortable setting of Milam House, volunteers and staff strive to address residents' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. As a home for people who are moderately ill and no longer able to provide housing for themselves, Milam House provides a safety net of assistance when needed. Most of our volunteers prefer one-on-one work with the residents—like lending a helping hand, a listening ear, and a companionship to count on. However, some volunteers provide clerical and general office assistance as well as planning and execution of fundraising events. For more information, call 520-9248 or e-mail ahhvlntr@neosoft.com. You can also visit at http://www.neosoft.com/~ahhstaff/MilamHouse/.

Montrose Clinic/Houston Clinical Research Network is a community-based, non-profit agency that provides low- or no-cost health, social, educational, and research services; specializes in treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS care. Needed: cash gifts for indigent-patient care and capital campaign; volunteer time from general and specialty physicians or lay persons interested in HIV counseling and office support. 215 Westheimer, 520-2000.

Montrose Counseling Center needs office furniture and equipment and interested citizens to serve on boards of this mental-health facility, which has HIV, substance-abuse, and general counseling programs. 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

Omega House is a hospice for AIDS patients. Needed: foam eggshell mattress pads (twin-size), small adult diapers, chlorine bleach, and laundry detergent. 602 Branard, 523-7110.

Q-Patrol is dedicated to the prevention of hate crimes against gays and lesbians, patrols the bar areas in Montrose, and is always looking for volunteers. If you have at least one Friday or Saturday night per month, please call 528-SAFE (7233).

Rape Crisis Program Volunteers are needed in the rape crisis program of the Houston Area Women's Center. Volunteers answer hotline calls, counsel survivors in hospitals and at the center, and help with clerical support. The Women's Center offers extensive training for volunteers who work with survivors of sexual assault. For more information, call 528-6798, ext. 273.

Steven's House provides intermediate care in a homelike environment for people living with HIV/AIDS. Needed: linens, pillows, personal-hygiene products, paper products, cleaning products, laundry detergent, bleach, nonperishable food items and fresh produce; small and large TVs with remotes, a VCR, videos, office furniture and office supplies; volunteers for a variety of tasks and services. P.O. Box 131303, Houston 77219-1303, 522-5757. ▼

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Queer Quote of the Month

Judith Light

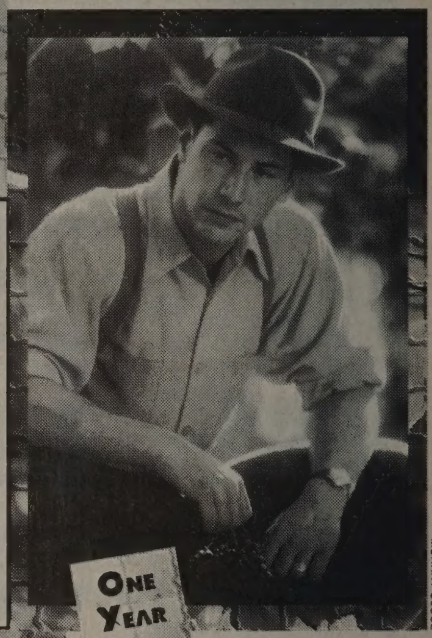
(*The Advocate*, 7/9/96, Alan Frutkin)

"Quite frankly, I don't know that [gays and lesbians] need [straights as spokespersons for them]. I think you are a very powerful community unto yourselves, and certainly you can speak beautifully and articulately for yourselves. I think in a sense we need you more than you need us, because, for me, you are our teachers. When gays and lesbians come out of the closet, they change the face of the world. It is a true political and spiritual act that requires tremendous courage and self-esteem. It strengthens and inspires us all."

Clockwise from top left:
Actress and AIDS activist **Judith Light** (pictured here in the long-running TV series *Who's the Boss*): Does she think they (straights) need us (gays) more than we need them?
Actor **Keanu Reeves** (seen here in 1995's *A Walk in the Clouds*): Does he ponder the meaning of straights and gays and . . . bathrooms?
Actress **Demi Moore** (pictured here from her most recent film *Striptease*): Does she think about being a man?
Seventies' singing group **The Village People** (seen here in their heyday): Did they more than just think about 30 pair of leather pants?

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano



MURRAY CLOSE

KERRY HAYES

ONE YEAR AGO THIS MONTH

Keanu Reeves

(*Out*, Jul/Aug/95, Tim Allis)

"What would be the best thing about being straight, aside from the sex? 'Straight? I guess I can't even look at it like that,' [Reeves] says. 'You mean what would I say to someone who's gay about what's the best thing about being straight?'

"Right.

" *'Ha, ha, ha!!'*—his laughter explodes. 'But wouldn't whatever that *thing* is be the best thing for being gay as well? There are no lines. I mean it's *humans*, man. I mean . . . what would I say? . . .' Then he thinks of something. 'We can go to different bathrooms in a restaurant!' And there you have it—the reason Reeves is not just another in a long line of macho swashbucklers who, try as they may, just don't get it. Reeves is a modern man. He gets it."

Dennis Rodman

(*Vanity Fair*, 6/96, George Wayne)

Wayne: You admit to being sexually confused, but you've said you've never experienced man-to-man sex. But even if you did, I don't think you would be man enough to admit it.

Rodman: Excuse me—I guess you don't know me that well. I have no shame with my game like that. That opportunity has not arrived yet, but there is nothing wrong with being who you want to be.

Jay Thomas

(*Entertainment Weekly*, "Cool Quotes," Summer Double Issue '96)

"Cool: 'Dennis Rodman. As soon as he heard he was heading to Seattle for the playoffs, he switched to a waterproof mascara. I think that's really cool. A transvestite sports hero—only in America.' "

Demi Moore

(*Newsweek*, 6/17/96, Jean Seligmann, Mark Starr, Karen Springen)

" 'I've always been curious about what life as a man must be like,' says Demi Moore in the June issue of the British mag *Arena*. Now, in a spread by celeb photographer and former Eurythmic Dave Stewart, she strikes a tender pose with what looks like a tall, handsome guy. But it's a trick shot: he is really she (Demi). In the following pages, Moore keeps the goatee but opens her shirt for a double-breasted shocker."

Me'Shell NdegéOcello

(*Out*, 7/96, Ray Rogers)

" 'Most black people are extremely homophobic. The record company says that's why [my album] didn't sell last time. I'm like, fine, that's their closed-mindedness. But [the new song, "Leviticus: Faggot," about a young black gay man's struggle in the world] has nothing to do with me trying to sway other people. That song is for me. I wrote that because of my own animosity and misunderstanding of gay men.' In New York, she explains, she used to go to Identity House to help her work through her own homophobia, back when she stocked books at the Oscar Wilde bookstore in Greenwich Village. 'Being gay can be a hard thing for me, and that's why when people say, "You chose to be that way," I'm always like, "Yeah!" ' she says, deadpan, eyes wide.

" 'I think it's interesting that among minorities there is intolerance. It's kind of weird to see racist lesbians,' she continues. 'I'm learning to try to be tolerant. That's always been a weird topic to me, because, I mean, I wake up every day, take my son to school, and I have this normal life. The hardest part is that people think you're different. I'm different because I'm a woman. I'm different because I'm black. I'm different because I'm gay. Yet, I do my wash. I had to wash eight loads of clothes today.'

"NdegéOcello's had her share of rejection by her own communities. An *Advocate* critic lambasted her for writing heterosexual love songs for her first album. 'I felt like, Who . . . is he to negate any experience I've ever had?' she says angrily. A writer from the African-American newspaper the *Sun* criticized the album's take on African-American culture. 'He said I was Afro-insipid! That I knew nothing about the black experience!' And before [her lastest album] *Peace Beyond Passion* is even released, she's already been called anti-Semitic for the line 'the so-called chosen make war,' while some gay men who've heard 'Leviticus: Faggot,' incredibly, have taken offense. 'I'm not black enough, I'm not gay enough, I can't win.' She rolls her head in frustration. So how does she think she fits into this country where people like things so pigeonholed? 'Oh, I don't. That's the thing.' "

The Village People

(*Details*, 7/96, William Shaw)

"The glorious optimism of 'Y.M.C.A.' 's first lines—'Young man, there's no need to feel down/I said, young man, pick yourself off the ground/I said, young man, 'cause you're in a new town/There's no need-to-be-un-hap-py'—were simultaneously the '70s own 'Don't Worry Be Happy' and a lecherous call to arms to the male youth of America.

"After 'In the Navy' came out, [record producer] Henri Belolo was invited to the Pentagon to discuss the use of 'In the Navy' as a recruiting song—which almost happened, until somebody pointed out its risqué subtext.

"The Village People were required to ooze the glamour of the disco floor wherever they went. En route to a record-release party in Toronto, Felipe [Rose, the Indian] and the others sat in a 1940s Rolls-Royce, and out of the blue they passed a motorcycle club parked by the side of the freeway. As one, the bikers turned and dropped their leather pants. Felipe sipped Cristal from a glass with his own name engraved in it and thought, 'How good can it get? All this and a thirty-bum salute?' "

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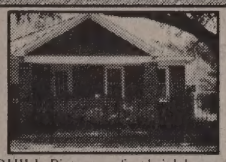

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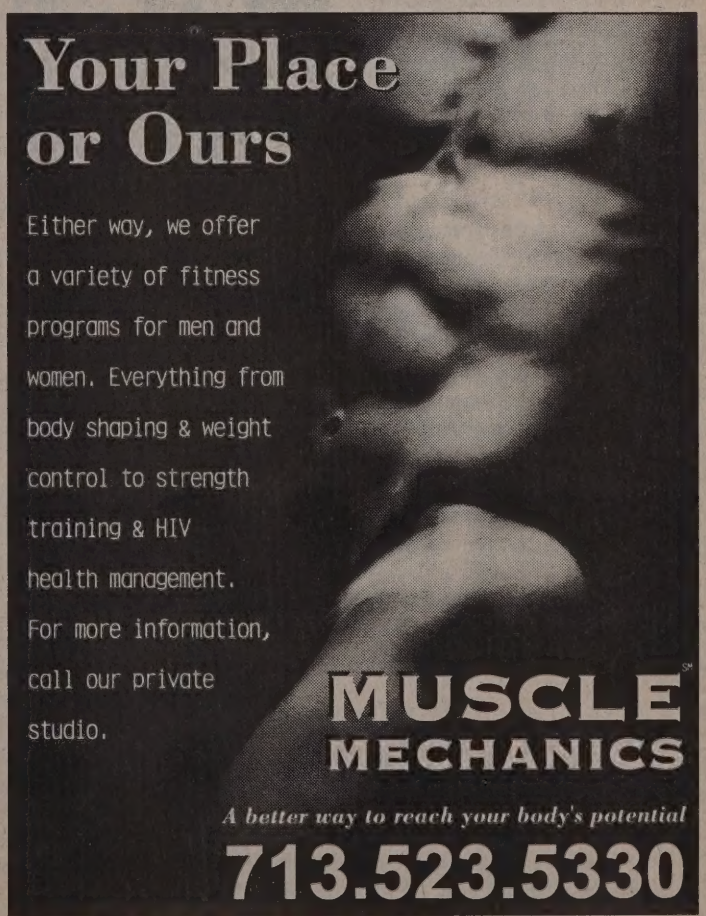

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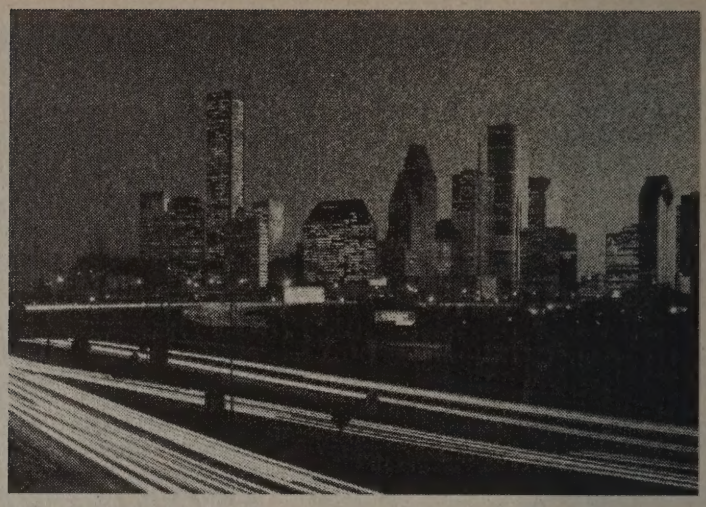


newsbriefs

RITA MAE BROWN TO APPEAR AT HOUSTON FUNDRAISER

by Tristan A. MacAvery

Famed author Rita Mae Brown will be the celebrated guest at a brunch to raise money for An Uncommon Legacy Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to funding lesbian-specific projects ranging from medical research to television production.

MARK HOMAN

"I do one national fundraiser per year," Ms. Brown said in a telephone interview, "and I wanted to help An Uncommon Legacy because of what they are doing for so many young women. It's good to see older generations helping younger ones; when we were coming along, there was nobody at all to help."

Brown, perhaps best known for her groundbreaking 1973 novel *Rubyfruit Jungle*, has long been recognized as an outstanding voice in the gay and lesbian community. Her latest book is *Riding Shotgun*, which was released last April. Her "Mrs. Murphy" mystery novels, written in collaboration with her cat Sneaky Pie, are "always released in November," Brown tells us. "Sneaky Pie's next book is called *Murder She Meowed*. Saucy little wench, isn't she?"

Brown will be welcoming guests at a reception in Dallas on Saturday, August 10, and will be sharing brunch here in Houston on Sunday, August 11. The brunch will take place at 11:30 a.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel, 1300 Lamar, and will also feature emcee Sydney Seaward and comedian Vickie Shaw. The brunch will be followed by a book signing, sponsored by Crossroads Market. The cost of the brunch is $50 per person, with half of that amount benefiting the foundation.

Founded in 1990 by Vivian Shapiro of East Hampton, Long Island, New York, An Uncommon Legacy was incorporated in 1993 and provides an opportunity for lesbians to contribute to their own self-interest without having to "come out," where they may face severe discrimination. More than $134,000 in grants have been awarded to organizations such as the National Center of Lesbian Rights, the Lesbian Research Network, and Woman Vision Video.

An Uncommon Legacy Foundation awarded a total of thirty $1,000 scholarships in 1994 to out lesbians attending colleges and universities. A Houston chapter of An Uncommon Legacy is being formed, and they are calling for grant and application scholarships at this time. For further information, write to the foundation at P.O. Box 667052, Houston TX 77266.

BAYOU CITY BOYS CLUB — MORE THAN MERE PARTY ANIMALS

by Tristan A. MacAvery

"It started out as a birthday party for several of our friends," says Brad Smith, last year's president of the Bayou City Boys Club (BCBC). "They all had birthdays in March and April, and we put together this huge jungle party for about 400 people. It was a turning point—a 30th birthday—for us, and we wanted to throw a big bash to raise some money for the HIV-positive community in Houston. We discovered that we were good at putting together huge parties, and we also raised quite a bit of money at the same time. We had fun while we were doing good."

From these humble beginnings—which has unfortunately led some people to believe that BCBC is only an "exclusive clique" who puts on parties for the elite—grew a major nonprofit corporation whose annual trio of parties raised over $100,000 for AIDS charities in 1995. Matt Krol, who took over the presidency from Brad Smith this year, is leading the BCBC to ever-greater records in fundraising. Their first party of 1996, Jungle Lust IV (held on the Saturday before Easter), raised $30,000 for Body Positive/Houston, AIDS Foundation Houston, and Houston Clinical Research Network.

Smith is the "PR Point Man" for Hurricane '96, this year's second blowout party to be held Saturday, August 24, at Garden in the Heights, 3926 Feagan (near Waugh), from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. "Our target is to raise $35,000,

and I have every confidence that we'll raise even more," says Smith. Beneficiaries will be Omega House, The Assistance Fund, and HIV/AIDS Education and Services of the Houston Red Cross.

"Of our three annual parties, we actively vote on beneficiaries for each of the first two," Smith explained. "The third party, the New Year's Party held at the Wyndham Warwick Hotel, is always done in cooperation with and for the benefit of Bering." Last year, the black-tie affair raised over $45,000 for Bering.

"Each party is headed by two co-chairs," Smith tells us. "The Hurricane '96 is headed by Wade Knight and Dan Logan, who are doing a fabulous job. We anticipate that this blowout will be our most successful ever."

Each party is preceded by a kickoff party which solicits sponsorship for the funds needed to sponsor the big party; these sponsors underwrite the costs of each major party so that all proceeds go to the beneficiaries. "It was difficult getting sponsors in the beginning," Smith says, "because no one really knew who we are. Now we have people who donate regularly to the parties, and we always have a terrific theme and a terrific time." Previous New Year's themes included New Year's in New York, in New Orleans, and last year, Las Vegas; this year, it will be New Year's in Los Angeles, with beautiful Hollywood settings and backdrops to recreate the the highlights of the city.

Advance tickets, "Hurricane Survival Kits" costing $30 each (includes an open bar and a map to the event), are available at Basic Brothers and LOBO in Houston as well as LOBO in Austin. If tickets are still available, they will be $40 at the door. The crowd of 1,000 dancing men will be led by Los Angeles DJ Mike Mitchell, and all proceeds go to the designated charities.

For further information about Hurricane '96, call 713/521-3696 or 713/222-6621, x326.

ALL BRAINS AND THIS TOO

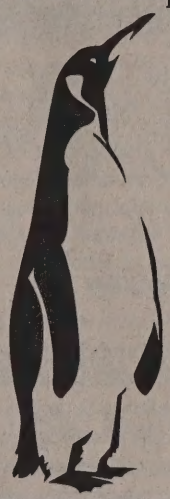
by Tristan A. MacAvery

Mensa, the worldwide high-IQ society, held its Annual Gathering (AG) in Houston during the 4th of July weekend at the Hyatt Regency hotel downtown. Well over 1,000 members, with tested IQs in the 130-and-higher range, spent several days of high revelry attending talks, playing games, and enjoying each other's company. True to the 10 percent rule, quite a number of these geniuses are members of a special interest group (or SIG) known as GaySIG, and this gathering proved that beauty and brains are not mutually exclusive phenomena.

Although there are more than 100 SIGs listed in the membership literature for Mensa, the GaySIG is the only SIG officially recognized and chartered by the central organization. Nationally, the GaySIG has over 300 members, and at every AG they hold a Hospitality Suite that is the talk of the entire Mensa organization. Gay and straight alike are welcomed to "come in and set a spell," with a no-host cash bar, beer, and sodas on ice in the bathtub, and plenty of conversation ranging from politics and nuclear physics to show tunes and getting physical.

On two of the evenings, near midnight, GaySIG took over the main Hospitality Suite downstairs and held their "Midnight Feeding Frenzy." The usual fare downstairs was hot dogs, nachos, the general convention munchies; when GaySIG got hold of it, there were chocolate-dipped strawberries, cakes and pies that you wouldn't believe, and designer pizzas. Next year's AG will be held in Birmingham, Alabama, and already there are rumors of several

The Temperature is Rising...



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Book Signing & Silent Auction

GaySIG members wanting to serve at the Feeding Frenzy dressed in Scarlet O'Hara dresses and huge sun hats, offering "true Southern hospitality." One thing is certain: It won't be boring!

John Favretto of St. Louis, who serves as chair for the GaySIG, observed, "The annual gathering is a time for GaySIG members to renew friendships, make new ones, visit a different city each year, and maybe even find Mr./Ms. Right—or at least Right-Now!"

For further information about the Mensa national organization, call (800) 666-3672.

PRIDE PARADE VIDEO AVAILABLE

This year's Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride parade and Pride Fest activities are available on a two-hour VHS video. Hosted by local access Houston TV celebrity "Mad Dog" Matt Locklin and nationally known comedienne Nancy Ford, the "official" Pride Committee authorized video includes a three-camera setup and footage of pre- and post-parade activities, including Candace Gingrich's Pride Fest speech, and a pride message and interview with national recording artist Janice Ian. All entry groups in the parade are included; trophy winners are indicated as well. To order your copy, send check or money order for $19.96 to: Infinite Index Independent, P.O. Box 66690, Houston, TX 77266. Sales benefit the Pride Committee of Houston and AIDS Housing Coalition Houston. For more information, call Matt Locklin Entertainment at 713/902-2231.

STONE SOUP RECEIVES NEW VAN

Stone Soup, AIDS Foundation Houston's food pantry, received a new cargo van as the result of a generous donation from three charitable organizations: The Krewe of Olympus Texas, The Diana Foundation, and the Four Seasons Club. The van was dedicated on June 29 at Stone Soup, 608 Westheimer. The primary goal of Stone Soup Food Assistance Program is to provide non-perishable and perishable food items as well as toiletry items to HIV-symptomatic individuals. Thanks to generous Houstonians who donate goods and cash, Stone Soup is able to provide no-cost food and toiletry items to over 1,000 qualified clients on a regular basis each year. To donate needed supplies, call 623-6796.

UNICEF'S KIDS HELPING KIDS COMPETITION SUPPORTS OLYMPIC AIDS-ATLANTA

The U.S. Committee for UNICEF-Houston/Galveston has announced a competition for Houston/Galveston area children (up to 18 years of age) and children's organizations who would like to participate in the Kids Helping Kids program developed by the U.S. Committee for UNICEF.

Olympic AIDS-Atlanta was launched in November 1995 and represents the first time that the Olympic Games have been formally associated with an international humanitarian fundraising campaign. The goal is to raise money so that UNICEF may provide immunization, education, and recreational programs, as well as psychosocial counseling, for an estimated 18 million children in 14 war-torn countries. It is a special program of The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) and the United States Committee for UNICEF. Four-time Olympic Gold medalist Johann Olav Koss, together with many prominent athletes, including Houston's own Hakeem Olajuywon, are supporting Olympic Aid-Atlanta.

To receive an information kit, which includes fundraising information, a pledge sheet, and thank-you receipts, please contact U.S. Committee for UNICEF-Houston/Galveston at 713/963-9390.

WOLFELT TO FACILITATE FREE SEMINAR ON GRIEF

World-renowned author, lecturer, and practicing clinical thanatologist Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt will be facilitating two free seminars at the Ramada Hotel Astrodome/Medical Center on Wednesday, August 21. The first, for the bereaved, is entitled "The Heart of Grief: Lessons in Hope and Healing." Beginning at 7 p.m., it is designed to help the bereaved cope with the feelings of loss. The second is for professional and volunteer caregivers seeking to enhance their caregiving skills; it is entitled "Lessons in Caring for the Dy-

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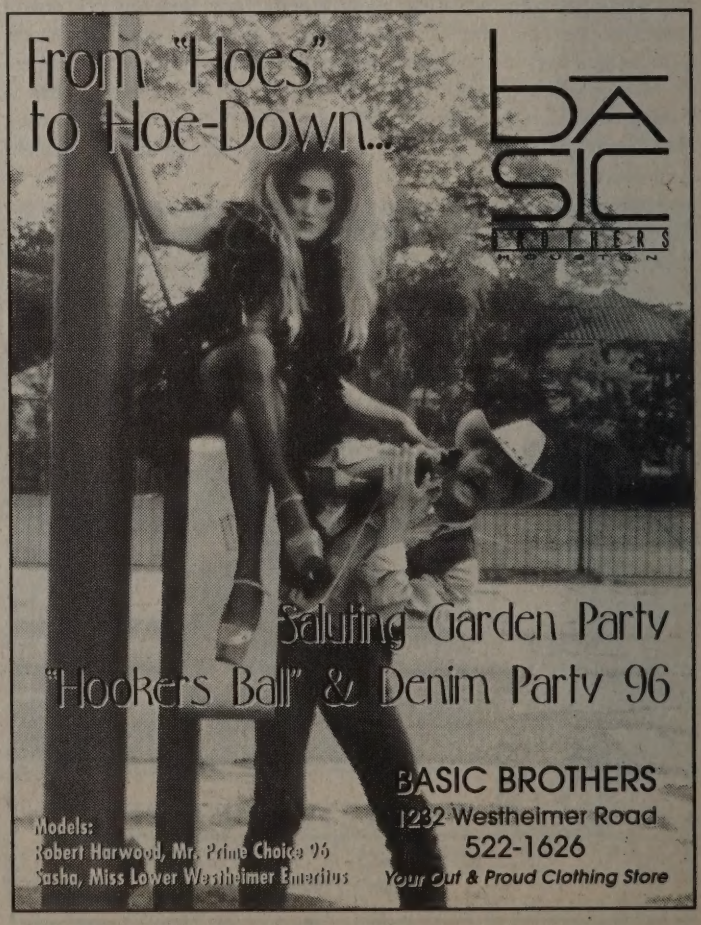

ing." It will begin at 1 p.m. and focus on the importance of the role of the professional and volunteer caregiver in the lives of the terminally ill. Three hours of continuing education units are available for LPC, TAADAC, and social work. Both programs are offered free of charge.

This seminar is underwritten as a community service by Crespo Funeral Homes. Cosponsors include AARP/Widowed Persons Service, Memorial Health Care Systems, and the Grief Center of Texas. Registration will begin 30 minutes prior to the start of each session. To pre-register or for more information, call Madeleine Crespo at 713/485-2711.

DATE SET FOR HOUSTON WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 21, is the date set for the next Houston Women's Festival to be held at Garden in the Heights, 3926 Feagan, one block north of Memorial Dr. Festival producers are now seeking participation from vendors, visual artists, performing artists, and volunteers.

The festival offers women the opportunity to share their original music and fine art. It provides a marketplace where artisans, importers, and craftswomen can display and sell their work. It also offers businesses and organizations the opportunity to promote their services to the community. The Garden in the Heights is an indoor/outdoor facility that was formally a German beer garden; it features a dance floor, an outdoor dining area, and plenty of free, off-street parking. The visual art show will be held indoors in the Main Hall, while the continuous live entertainment will be held onstage from 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. Vendors booths will line the entire venue, and three separate bar areas will provide refreshments.

The Houston Women's Festival is now recruiting a few key people to help organize the event. Specifically needed are a stage manager, publicist, and general volunteers to help on the day of the event. The Houston's Women's Festival is produced by The Athena Art Project, a nonprofit organization supporting the artistic endeavors of women. Anyone interested in contributing, contact the HWF at 713/868-1910, or e-mail address AthenaArt@aol.com.

ASSISTHERS CARE TEAM PROJECT

The goal of AssistHers is to help women who are coping with a life-threatening or debilitating illness live as normally as possible. Volunteers are trained and supervised in the provision of direct care such as emotional support, meal preparation, shopping, hospital and home visits, pet care, plant and lawn maintenance, transportation, and other assistance. Volunteers work as members of a Care Team. Since Care Teams are assigned to one client, it is realistic to expect two visits a week from volunteers.

Those eligible for service are women whose emotional, social, or sexual relationships are primarily with other women and who have a debilitating

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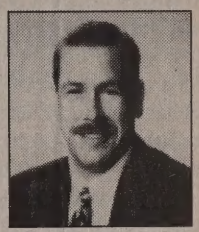

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or life-challenging disease, illness, or condition. Assistance may extend to a woman's partner, caregiver, or family. Services are provided regardless of ability to pay and regardless of age, race ethnicity, or economic status. Volunteer training will begin in September. For more information, contact Tori Williams or Susie Rokes at 713/552-9445.

THE SEVEN DEADLY VIRTUES BERING & FRIENDS THEATRE PRODUCTION BENEFIT

Join Bering & Friends as they stage *The Seven Deadly Virtues*, a divine comedy spiced with musical deviltry, at Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Proceeds benefit the Bering Support Network, offering counseling and other resources for people touched by HIV/AIDS.

Featuring song and dance numbers from many well-loved Broadway musicals and Hollywood movies including *Les Miserables, Beauty and the Beast, Dick Tracy, Man of La Mancha,* and *Camelot, The Seven Deadly Virtues* offer a rousing and robust new look at the forces of good versus evil. In it, God and Lucifer, frequent dinner pals and game aficionados, decide to raise their usual stakes and gamble for the ultimate prize: the souls of mankind. This fourth production of Bering and Friends is directed by Judy Frow, a professional actor, musician, director, and choreographer. She co-wrote the play with her husband, musician and writer, Gene Smith.

Performances are at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, August 2; at 2:30 and 8 p.m. on Saturday, August 3; and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 4. General seating tickets are $15, $12 for seniors. Advance tickets for these shows are available at Basic Brothers Clothing, 1232 Westheimer, and Uniglobe First Choice Travel, 2236 W. Holcombe; by calling 526-5846 or through the e-mail address beringtix@aol.com. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

The run kicks off with an opening-night Black Tie Gala on Thursday, August 1. Festivities include champagne and hors d'oeuvres at 7 p.m., curtain at 8:30 p.m., a dessert selection during intermission, and a private party with the cast after the show. Tickets for the Black Tie Gala are $50 each and available by calling 713/526-5846.

HOUSTON BLACK TIE 1996 GALA SET FOR NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 2, is the date set for the 1996 gala presented by Houston Black Tie Dinner, Inc. A cocktail hour, seated dinner, speakers, and silent auction will be held in the lobby of the First City Bank Building, 1021 Main St.

Last year, nearly 1,000 participants raised over $100,000 for its beneficiaries. The Houston Black Tie Dinner board hopes to see 1,500 in attendance this year to raise money for its 12 local beneficiaries, which include Bering, Body Positive-Houston, and Omega House.

The dinner will also benefit one national organization. The Victory Fund is a network of individuals committed to electing qualified openly gay and lesbian public officials. The Victory Fund is a bipartisan, non-connected, multi-candidate federal Political Action Committee (PAC) that backs candidates for races at the city, county, state, and federal levels.

Anyone interested in attending the dinner or serving as a volunteer can call either of the dinner co-chairs, Phil Lacy or Janine Brunjes, at the Houston Black Tie Dinner office, 713/523-9611.

TRASH AND TREASURE WANTED FOR RUMMAGE SALE

AIDS Housing Coalition Houston (AHCH) and TLC House Emergency Shelter-Montrose need your trash and treasure for a huge "Rummage-A-Rama" Sale to be held on Saturday, August 3, at 117 Tuam Ave. Everything from furniture and kitchen goods to electronics and sporting equipment will be accepted (no used mattresses, please). For donation info, please call 902-2231 or 521-1613.

FORGET BEVERLY HILLS—THE REAL ZIP IS 77006

Montrose 77006 TV hits the Houston Access Houston Air waves this month. Host "Mad Dog" Matt Locklin will be joined by guest reporters social activists Ray Hill & Julie Siska and social butterfly Gloria De Young. After the demise of *Gay 90's TV* and *Fern TV* and almost a year of not even one gay-and-lesbian-televised series, *Montrose 77006* hopes to finally give the Hous-

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ton gay and lesbian population some quality entertainment. Technical producer Ed Volkert III of Infinite Index Independent is an award-winning producer and has teamed up with local celeb Access Houston producer and host Matt Locklin to bring *Montrose 77006 TV* screaming to the airwaves. Locklin has in the past produced over 300 hours on the air with TV hits such as *AIDS Talk Houston TV, Montrose Clinic TV, Life Today TV, HIV+ Positive TV,* and in 1992 produced and hosted the political round table *Meet the Gay Candidates.*

MCC BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW HEADQUARTERS

Early on the morning of June 14, employees and members of the South Central District's board of directors celebrated the ground breaking which launched their building project in the Houston Heights. The South Central District is one of 11 districts of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC); Houston has been the home office for the past 15 years.

The plans call for the construction of two townhomes as an improvement to the property deeded to the district by the late Dr. Tom Reveley, a long-term treasurer and secretary for the district. One will be sold, the second retained by the district as its home office. The "prairie-style" homes, bearing a strong Frank Lloyd Wright influence, were designed by local architect J. Davis Raley.

REPUBLICAN YOUTH LEADER CHOOSES DEMOCRATS OVER GOP "INTOLERANCE"

Jim Marchbanks, chairman of the Teenage Republicans of Texas and youngest person ever to serve as a member of the state Republican Executive Committee, has switched parties, because "I cannot participate in, nor will I condone, the intolerance of the mainstream, which is the popular thing to do in the GOP."

Marchbanks' letter to Texas Democratic Party Chairman Bill White noted: "The Republican Party has lost its good motives and now seeks to change

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people who they feel are not socially acceptable. It is a party that feels no responsibility toward mainstream Americans, only to corporate special interest and its rich contributors."

Marchbanks, 19, was welcomed into the Democratic Party and predicted that other young people in the Republican Party, as well as others not currently involved in politics, would soon join the Democrats.

JUDY'S LANDING AT KOLBE HOUSE, AUNTIE EM

Following on the heels of the successful Movie Time Friday Nite program, Kolbe Project is announcing its Musicals Friday Nite. Every fourth Friday will feature a Rogers & Hammerstein (R&H) musical, beginning with the ultimate "community musical," *The Wizard of OZ*.

Al Clerc, a volunteer at Kolbe, is lending his collection of musicals, which has every R&H piece except *Flower Drum Song*. "Unless the popular demand is too great to resist," a spokesperson said, "Al will spare us *The Sound of Music*. This deliberate omission is in response to the fact that it seems to be as ubiquitous as *I Love Lucy*, appearing somewhere on cable every hour somewhere in the world."

Movie Time is the second Friday of each month; Musicals will be shown on the fourth Friday. A funny short film begins at 7 p.m., and the feature flick begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission and popcorn are free; a donation is requested for soda. For more information, call Chuck Perroncel at 522-8182.

MILAM HOUSE SEEKING CARING VOLUNTEERS

Milam House, a residential center for people living with HIV/AIDS, is in need of sincere individuals to offer friendship and support. Volunteer duties range from clerical and general office assistance to planning and execution of fundraising events. Many volunteers prefer one-on-one work with the residents, like lending a helping hand, a listening ear, and a companionship to count on. For more information, or to volunteer, call 520-9248.

business*briefs*

RIBBON-CUTTING AT LOBO'S NEW LOCATION

The Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (GHGLCC) will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony at LOBO Book Shop's new location, 3939-S Montrose Blvd. in the Montrose Commons, at noon on Thursday, August 1. LOBO will be providing refreshments and a door prize.

The ribbon-cuttings are part of the GHGLCC's promotion of member businesses and support of the community. Other activities of the chamber include monthly networking mixers and many services for members. Members and non-members are invited to the next mixer on Thursday, August 15, at 6: p.m. at 4200 Montrose; it will be co-hosted by Pride Mortgage, Preferred Graphics, and the *Gay/Lesbian Yellow Pages*. For further information about the GHGLCC, write to 1109 Hyde Park, Ste. 178, Houston, TX 77006, or call 713/523-7576. Visit their Web page at http://www.echonet.com/ghglcc.

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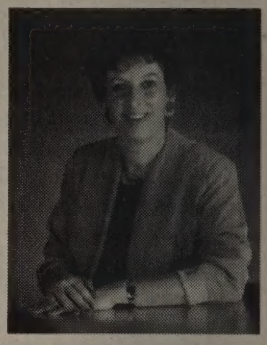

Pippa Wiley

GAY AND LESBIAN DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE

If your fingers are doing the walking looking for the *Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages*, you might want to double-check which finger you're getting. In recent months, Laura Villigran, publisher of the *Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages* reports that there has been confusion in Texas regarding *Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages*® and its purported affiliation with another yellow-pages service catering to the gay and lesbian community. "To make matters clear, we are not, and never have been, affiliated with Unity Yellow Pages, Apex Publishing, Maleman Funzine, Blueboy, Inc., or their past and present principals, Mr. Jerry Ruiz and Mr. James Robles."

The Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages, Inc. began in January 1991 and has become a valued tool in the economic development of the gay and lesbian business community.

"If anyone makes this allegation to you, especially in connection with concerns that yellow-page advertising services were paid for but not received, we ask that you bring these statements to our attention immediately." They can be reached by calling 713/942-0084.

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nationalbriefs

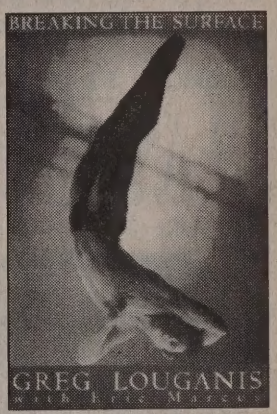
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

MYSTERY NOVELIST NAMED AS LESBIAN LOVER IN BIZARRE CASE

WASHINGTON —Noted mystery author Patricia Cornwall has been named in civil and criminal court papers in Washington and suburban Virginia as the lesbian lover of a one-time FBI agent, Marguerite Bennett, who now works as a police officer specializing in hostage negotiations. The strange case became public after Mrs. Bennett's husband, Eugene, was arrested after disguising himself and tying up a Methodist minister at the church Mrs. Bennett attends, threatening to blow him up with plastic explosives. Mr. Bennett's attorney says his client wanted to lure his estranged wife to the church so he could talk to her and that Mr. Bennett is mentally disoriented. Authorities believe Bennett created the hostage situation so he could confront—and perhaps kill—his estranged wife. In the civil proceedings, Mr. Bennett says his wife is a lesbian who has been having an affair with the popular mystery writer, Patricia Cornwall, for six years. Cornwall, whose best known work is the mystery novel, Post Mortem, has recently signed a $25-million book deal with Putnam Books.

TV GOLD: LOUGANIS' STORY TO BE BIOPIC

HOLLYWOOD —The entertainment industry newspaper Variety reports that the USA Network is producing a made-for-television movie based on Olympic gold medalist Greg Louganis' autobiography, Breaking the Surface. The TV bio is expected to air sometime next year, although the cable network says none of the roles have yet been cast.



TEXAS JUDGE DISMISSES PALIMONY SUIT AGAINST FAMED PIANIST

FT. WORTH, Texas —A Texas state court judge has thrown out a palimony lawsuit filed by Thomas Zaremba of Michigan

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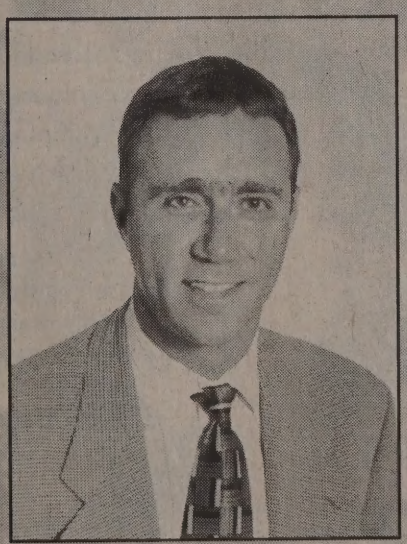

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against internationally famed classical pianist Van Cliburn, saying there was no written agreement about financial support between the two men during their 17-year relationship, and that the state doesn't recognize such same-sex relationships. Zaremba, 48, had filed the suit claiming, among other things, that during his relationship with Cliburn, the pianist had had sex with other men and exposed him to HIV as a result. Attorneys for Cliburn, 61, said he has not been tested for HIV and that Zaremba's suit was little more than a form of extortion.

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$100K NEA GRANT FOR AIDS QUILT PHOTO/CD PROJECT

SAN FRANCISCO —The National Endowment for the Arts has given the NAMES Project a $100,000 grant to help photograph and create digital images of the nearly 34,000 panels that currently make up the huge AIDS Quilt. The photo project includes plans to create CD-ROM versions of the images that would be viewable via a home computer and via computer services storing the digital images. Actress Jane Alexander, chair of the NEA, said works of art like the AIDS Memorial Quilt "embody compassion and the creative spirit" that have been spurred on in the face of the "crisis that has devastated the lives of so many Americans."

MILITARY

PENTAGON POLICY CASE APPEALED TO SUPREME COURT

WASHINGTON —Attorneys representing discharged Navy Lt. Paul Thomasson have filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the government's so-called "don't ask, don't tell" restrictions on gays and lesbians in the nation's armed forces. Thomasson's appeal is the first challenge to reach the high court, although it won't be known until later this year whether the justices will accept the appeal or not.

BANNED IN BOSTON: NO NAUGHTINESS IN GAY PARADE

BOSTON —Proper (and not so proper) Bostonians clashed following this year's annual Gay Pride Parade, where reports say a nude man walked on stilts, and two bare-breasted women fondled each other. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino was joined by parade organizers in condemning what they

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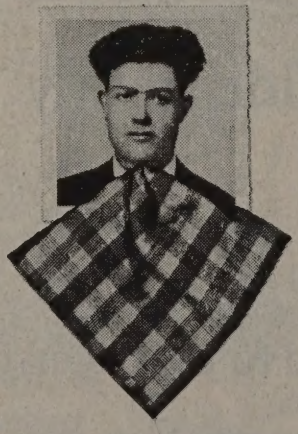

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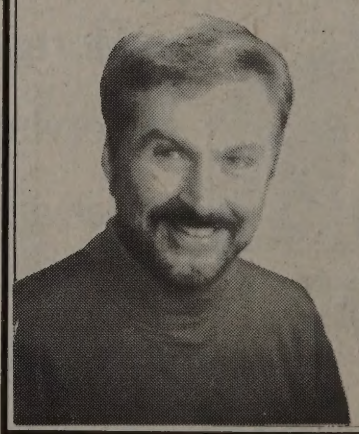

Joseph has been featured in the *Houston Post, Uptown Express,* CBS evening news and in the book, *Tales of Reincarnation.*

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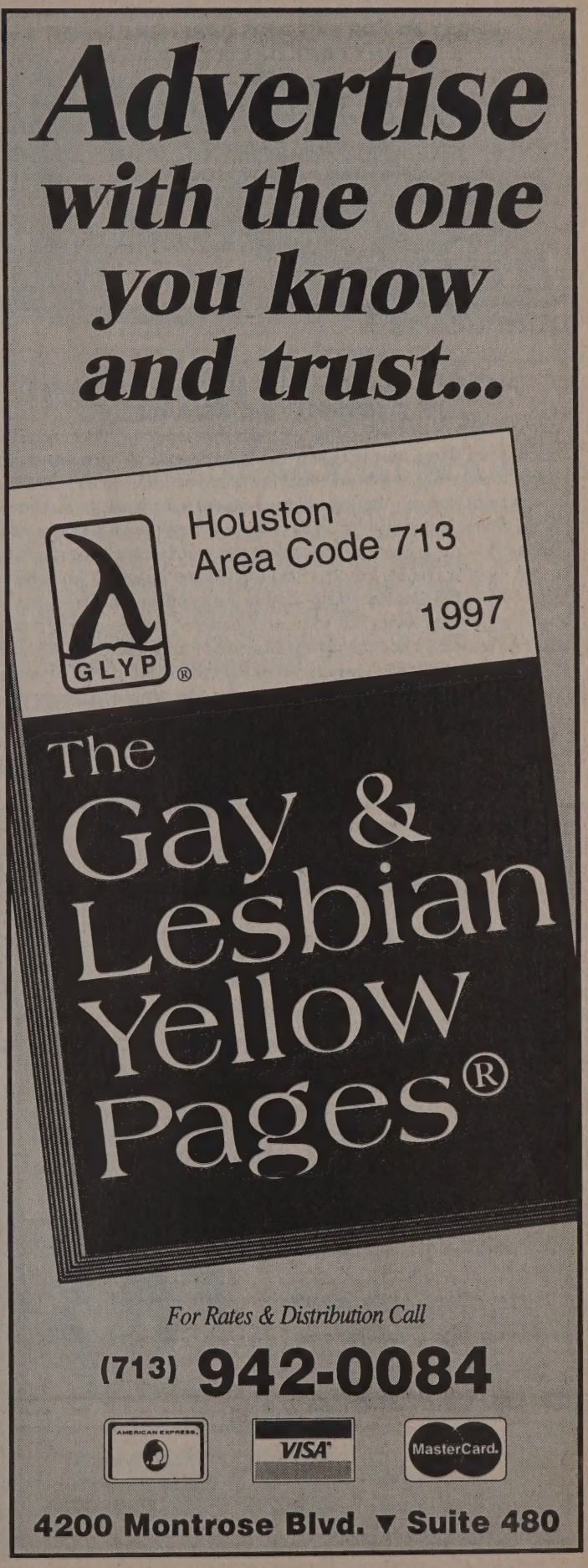
termed "inappropriate and unlawful" behavior during the parade. Organizers of the parade said the nude man and topless women were not registered to participate in the parade itself and joined the event, attended by an estimated 100,000 people, along the route. Parade officials offered to help police locate the people for possible prosecution. The city council has vowed to hold hearings on why police didn't arrest the three people during the parade itself.

PARTNER BENEFITS

EMPLOYEE CHARGES FIRM'S PARTNERS BENEFITS BIASED AGAINST STRAIGHTS

MINNEAPOLIS —Peg Daluge has filed a complaint with the Minnesota human rights department charging that her employer, HealthSystem Minnesota, discriminated against her because she is heterosexual when it refused to add her longtime companion, Dean McCurdy, to the firm's domestic partner health benefits program. HealthSystem Minnesota's domestic partner benefits package is restricted by the firm's policy to the same-sex partners of its workers, and specifically excludes opposite-sex couples from the benefits program. A spokesperson for HealthSystem Minnesota declined to comment on the complaint itself, but told local reporters that the company decided to limit the benefit package to same-sex partners because heterosexual couples can legally marry, making them eligible for an equivalent spousal benefits package. But Daluge and McCurdy, who are both in their 50s, have no plans to get married even though they own their home together, are named as beneficiaries on the other's life insurance policies, and have shared their lives together for a number of years. Minnesota is one of the few states in the U.S. which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and Daluge says that's exactly what the company's policy does, although against heterosexuals who choose not to get married.



PHILLY MAYOR EXTENDS PARTNER BENEFITS TO TINY PART OF CITY WORKERS

PHILADELPHIA —Philadelphia Mayor Ed has announced that the city will now offer healthcare and family-leave benefits to the same-sex partners of non-civil service workers. The package will extend the same benefits to domestic partners that the married spouses of city employees currently receive. But only about 500 municipal workers would be covered by the mayor's executive order. Activists in the city have been working for more than five years trying to get a city council ordinance that would extend a similar benefits package to Philadelphia's full 25,000 municipal employees.

GAY RIGHTS

MARRIED GRANDFATHER SUES SHERIFF'S DEPT. OVER 'ANTI-GAY ASSAULT'

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. —A 63-year-old married grandfather and retired teacher has filed a lawsuit against the San Mateo (Calif.) County sheriff's department, charging that an officer brutalized him after he had stopped at a vista point along an interstate highway to see if there was an easier route to his destination at Half Moon Bay. The suit claims the officer believed the suspect was gay and was seeking sex at the spot. E. Lon Chaney Jr. charges in the suit that Deputy Timothy Reid tripped and assaulted him as he was returning to his car after asking another parked driver for directions. The suit charges that Chaney was so severely battered that he suffered a stroke during the incident and that an ambulance had to be called to take him to a hospital. Chaney's suit—which names Reid, the sheriff's department, and San Mateo County as defendants—claims that, after arrest, the deputy shouted into his police radio, "I've got one," and that when paramedics arrived, he told them to use rubber gloves because "this one's probably got HIV." Chaney's attorney says the incident reflects a pattern of arrest and abuse by police in the area of anyone they believe may be gay and that his client just had the bad fortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

TENNESSEE SODOMY STATUTE OVERTURNED

NASHVILLE —The Tennessee state Supreme Court has let stand a lower court ruling overturning the state's anti-sodomy statute. Earlier this year a state appeals court ruled that Tennessee's Homosexual Practices Act violates state constitutional privacy guarantees. Several Tennessee residents originally challenged the state law, arguing that prosecution under the anti-sodomy statute could cost them their jobs, homes, and families and that private sexual behavior was not the state's business.

CHARGES OF POLICE INTERFERENCE DROPPED AGAINST TEXAS ACTIVIST

HOUSTON —Authorities have dropped charges of interfering with a police investigation after concluding they didn't really have a case to make against Ray Hill, a prominent Texas gay rights activist. Hill, 54, had been arrested last year after he showed up at a gay bookstore where he had gone to advise customers who were expected to be arrested of their legal rights. The police officers at the store also arrested Hill at the time and charged him with interfering with their investigation. Hill said police did in fact arrest several men at the store where they handcuffed him and arrested him. In 1987, Hill successfully challenged a Houston city law that made giving verbal advice to people being arrested a crime. The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately agreed with Hill and struck down the law.

GAY YOUTH AGENCY & CALIF. OFFICIALS AGREE TO HALT SEXUAL CONDUCT PROBE

LOS ANGELES —California social services department officials have ended their efforts to close the Gay & Lesbian Adolescent Social Services agency—stemming from charges of improper sexual contact between staff members and teenagers being housed at the group home—after the agency signed an agreement removing the organization's founder Teresa DeCrescenzo from routine operating responsibilities at the agency. In signing the agreement, the gay and lesbian youth agency admitted none of the specific charges, but does admit that there was improper sexual contact between adults at the organization and teens in its care. The agreement also acknowledges that the agency more than once knew such contact had gone on but did nothing to prevent it. Leaders of the Gay & Lesbian Ado-

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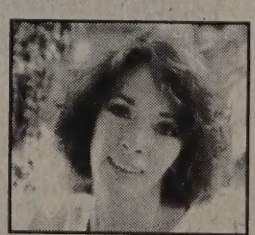

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lescent Social Services agency, which has adamantly denied any wrongdoing, said the agreement was a "face-saving" move on the part of state officials because they realized they could not win their case in court.

GAY L.A. COP SUSPENDED, BUT ALLOWED TO STAY ON POLICE FORCE

LOS ANGELES —A Los Angeles Police Department review board has given Sgt. Mitch Grobeson, the openly gay cop whose 1993 lawsuit effectively ended the department's anti-gay policies, a two-month suspension for wearing his uniform at gay community events without permission and for recruiting gays and lesbians through magazine ads without authority of the LAPD. A spokesperson for Grobeson said the 10-year LAPD veteran was happy with the review board's decision because it allows him to stay on the city's police force. Grobeson could have been dismissed as a result of the charges, which included wearing his uniform while off duty at a gay pride event and an AIDS fundraiser, in addition to running the unauthorized ads.

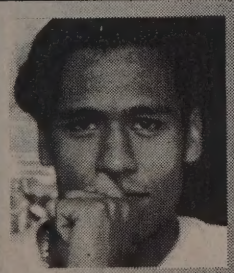
RELIGION

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS CALL FOR BOYCOTT OF DISNEY

NEW ORLEANS —The 15.6-million member Southern Baptist Convention has formally called for its congregations to boycott Walt Disney Company's products, services, and entertainment industries because of what the religious denomination considers anti-Christian, anti-family values—including allowing gays and lesbians to organize events at Disney's theme parks. The resolution calling for the boycott charges that the "Disney Co. has given the appearance that the promotion of homosexuality is more important than its historic commitment to traditional family values." Disney officials have declined to comment on the boycott, but Baptists may have a little trouble following the boycott since Disney, one of the largest American corporations, owns not only its well-known theme parks in California and Florida, but also ABC-TV, Touchstone and Miramax films, and is a major partner in McDonald's.

PRESBYTERIANS CONTINUE WRANGLE OVER HOMOSEXUALITY

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. —In a vote by delegates from the denomination's 171 presbyteries, 57 percent voted for an amendment against ordaining



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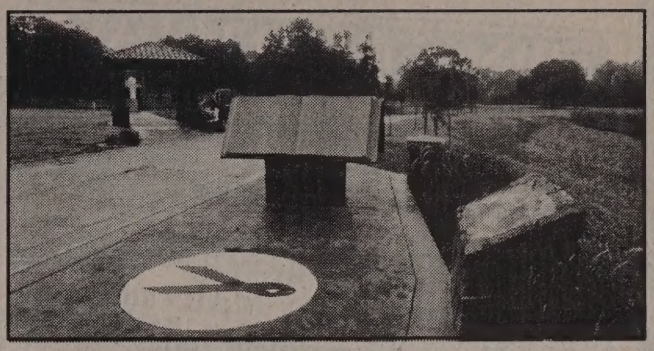

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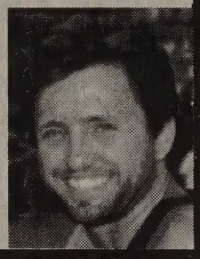

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active homosexuals. Activists said they were disappointed but that the vote represented an improvement over the last assembly in 1991. Delegates attending the general conclave of the Presbyterian Church (USA) have had a full plate of issues on their agenda during the confab, but overriding many items is the question of ordaining homosexuals in the ministry. Not only was the question of ordaining gays a direct issue with competing proposals to effectively bar ordaining gays or leaving the issue in the hands of local churches, but larger issues such as joining associations with other denominations also focused the delegates' attention on the role of gay clergy. In considering whether or not to join with the United Church of Christ, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church, the International Council of Community Churches, and the United Methodist Church in the unifying Church of Christ Uniting organization, one overriding concern for many conservative Presbyterians has been whether gay clergy in the other churches that ordain homosexuals could minister to Presbyterian congregations. The organization's human sexuality and ordination committee recommended that ordination should be limited to individuals who observe "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman—or chastity in singleness." Although the Presbyterian Church has officially welcomed gays and lesbians to its congregations for decades, it has also long barred "self-affirming, practicing homosexuals" as ministers.

GAY PRIDE PARADES

LARGEST EVER GAY PRIDE PARADE IN UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY —Recent anti-gay actions by Utah lawmakers, including a ban on gay and lesbian clubs at public schools, may have helped make this year's annual Gay Pride Day event the largest in the state's history, organiz-

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ers said. Thousands of people—both gays and straights—turned out for this year's parade and festival. One parade organizer said the state legislature had done "more for us than we could ever do for ourselves" in drawing such a large crowd. Keynote speaker at the event was Chastity Bono, daughter of actress Cher and U.S. Rep. Sonny Bono (R-Calif.), who told the audience that Utah activists fighting anti-gay legislative efforts in the state had "advanced the entire community's fight for human rights."

POLITICS

CLINTON 'ADVOCATE' INTERVIEW

LOS ANGELES —In an interview in the Los Angeles gay newsmagazine The Advocate, President Clinton reiterated his view that marriage is an institution between a man and a woman, as a far-right bill in Congress declares, and says he is proud of his record of working to end discrimination against homosexuals in the U.S. and of the large number of gay men and lesbians he has named to posts in his administration. But in the interview, Clinton says of the controversy that erupted early in his term over ending the military ban, "There are some things I think I should have done differently." He says he now believes he should have first worked with congressional and Pentagon leaders to build a broader consensus, saying that possibly moving in "incremental steps" might have been a better way to approach ending the ban. The President, however, sidesteps questions in the interview about whether he would, if re-elected, renew any efforts to end the current restrictions against homosexuals in the armed forces.

S.F. MOVES TO END COLORADO BOYCOTT

SAN FRANCISCO —Openly gay Supervisor Tom Ammiano has introduced a measure that would repeal a 1992 ordinance that effectively barred San Francisco from doing business with firms in Colorado after voters there narrowly approved an anti-gay ballot measure, Amendment 2. Ammiano said the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling declaring Amendment 2 unconstitutional eliminates the reason for the original boycott, which barred San Francisco from purchasing goods or services made or offered in the state of Colorado and prohibited use of government funds for city employees to travel to the state on official business, including conventions and conferences.

OREGON INITIATIVE CALLED OFF IN WAKE OF AMENDMENT 2 RULING

PORTLAND, Ore. —Lon Mabon, head of the anti-gay Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), announced at a press conference that the organization will discontinue gathering signatures to put a new ballot measure before state voters this year in an effort to block civil rights protections for homosexuals. Oregon rights activists said the OCA move wasn't surprising in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in May declaring that Colorado's Amendment 2, which the OCA had used as a model, was unconstitutional.

FEDERAL COURT NIXES 'COMMUNICATIONS DECENCY ACT'

PHILADELPHIA —A panel of three federal court judges has blocked enforcement of the federal Communications Decency Act of 1996, while legal challenges to the constitutionality of the legislation continued their way through federal courts. The legislation, signed into law by President Clinton, prohibits distribution of obscene or "indecent" materials using the Internet computer network or via other commercial computer services, carrying penalties of up to $250,000 and two years in prison. Opponents

Continued on page 70

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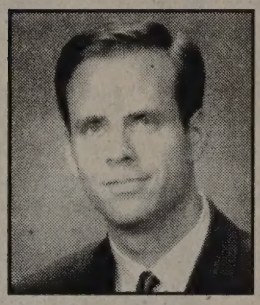
Remember the Alamodome

Experience is reminiscent of past civil rights struggles

by Dale Carpenter

The air of the convention hall was thick with hate. State convention delegates, drunk with power and righteous in their condemnation of those who supposedly threaten their way of life, cheered and booed and stomped their feet to protect families from the coming immoral hordes. They had their way in the platform and in the delegates chosen to attend the national convention. They seethed against the U.S. Supreme Court and its decision to lift up the very people they were determined to exclude. It was the kind of gathering you get when participants believe that God has blessed their mission, and that unmistakable passages in the Bible compel it. It was an impressive display by the far-right faction of the majority party in Texas. It was their high-water mark, the zenith of their control. It was the state Democratic convention of 1960 and it was controlled by segregationists.



Dale Carpenter

No explanation offered

I arrived in San Antonio for the 1996 Republican state convention at the Alamodome not quite knowing what to expect. Only hours before, the Texas Supreme Court had called to say that they were overturning a judge's decision ordering the state GOP to give Log Cabin an information booth at the convention. The state Supreme Court judges said that they had "tentatively" concluded that the party could exclude anybody it damn well pleased from its convention, and that the party was not obligated to live up to its contract to provide Log Cabin a booth. No reasoning, no explanation. The next night, four of those same Supreme Court judges were feted by party leaders at a reception held in their honor. I hope the Supreme Court judges enjoyed their reception; that the hors d'oeuvres were delectable and the conversation witty and inspiring. I was not there.

Log Cabin's delegates really didn't have much hope to improve the state party platform on homosexuality. We each got precisely two-and-a-half minutes to "testify" before the platform committee. One of the platform committee members, a particularly staunch defender of the family, threw down a Log Cabin flyer I had handed her and announced loudly that she now needed to wash her hands. The 1994 state GOP platform said that gays "lead to the breakdown of the family." Now it says that we merely "contribute" to the breakdown of the family. But they couldn't resist adding to the 1996 platform that we "tear at the fabric of American society."

Even seemingly innocuous policy issues at the convention turned into a referendum on moral rectitude. By a narrow margin, delegates voted to end the party's long-standing support of statewide referenda and initiatives. Why? Party leaders said that such initiatives could be used to promote the causes of the "wrong kind of people," like gambling interests, abortionists, and homosexuals. Their cultural forbears—the segregationists—inveighed against a different "wrong kind of people."

Despite being shut out, we were determined to get our message of equality for gays to the delegates. We divided up the hall and each passed out Log Cabin leaflets to the assembled conventioneers. It was the same flyer that party officials had barred from the convention program because there would be "families with children" attending. After all, the flyer said obscene things like, "We want equal rights, not special rights." There was also the ever-lewd line, "We believe in the importance of religious faith." And finally the leaflet included the

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shocking sentiment, "We believe in the importance of families," an unmistakable effort to recruit children.

One man, realizing what I was handing out, hectored the delegates in his section not to take the leaflets. "They're from Log Cabin!" he shouted. Too late, by that time the delegates were eagerly reading it. For most, it was the first time they'd read anything about gays not carefully prepared for them by the Family Research Council.

Another Log Cabin delegate was not so fortunate in his effort to distribute the flyer. A man approached him and, in a menacing tone, said: "I'm offended that you're even here, passing out this trash. You better be glad you people didn't get your booth, or we'd have put up the 'rope booth' right next door." His words have a long vintage in Texas history, where lynch mobs have settled more than one dispute against people they dislike.

Despite being shut out, we were determined to get our message of equality for gays to the delegates... "We want equal rights, not special rights."

On the final day of the convention, we were treated to a speech by Alan Keyes, an obscure anti-abortion contender for the Republican nomination who holds a mystical power over religious right activists. They cheered wildly when he said that "motherhood is every woman's vocation." He didn't mention gays; he didn't need to. Next came another failed presidential contender, Patrick Buchanan, who said that it was time for the "peasants" to "sharpen your pitchforks" and crusade to the GOP's national convention later this summer in San Diego. The last time an orator rallied a posse in such tones they headed for a jail and dragged a black man into the street and hanged him.

As we exited the Alamodome, we approached the booth Log Cabin had been promised. It had been taken over by the Georgia State College Republicans. The fraternity boys running the booth had put up a large sign which read, "We're not the Log Cabin Republicans, we love *women*!" When I asked the freshly scrubbed Georgian why he would put up such an insulting sign, he told me to go away and called me a "faggot." "And I'll bet you call black people 'niggers,' don't you?" I asked. "When I feel like it, I do," he responded in his best third-grade tone. We exchanged a few more greetings and I left San Antonio.

Driving back to Houston, alone, I was overcome for the first time with despair. I hardly recognized the party of Abraham Lincoln.

Struggles won on front lines

Recently, I've given a lot of thought to those embattled souls who stood up to the segregationists in the Democrat Party 36 summers ago. I'm sure they occasionally wondered whether it was all worth it, whether they weren't just pissing in the wind. Many times they heaved up their hopes onto a convention floor only to have them trampled underfoot by God's earthbound minions. They endured the shrieks and the insults and the angry kicks. They lost many court battles and platform fights and delegate votes before they won any. They went where they weren't wanted *because* they weren't wanted. They knew that civil rights struggles, like wars, aren't won in air-conditioned parlors but on front lines. They knew that there is nothing inevitable about human progress; that it is purchased with the toil and worry and fears and sometimes the blood of determined people. So they stayed and fought. Thank God they did. ▼

Dale Carpenter, a Houston attorney, is state president of the Log Cabin Republicans. The opinions expressed in this column are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Log Cabin or OutSmart *magazine.*

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Separate but equal in our own community?—Shame! Shame!

Vestiges of the "women not welcome" mentality still remain in Houston's gay nightclubs.

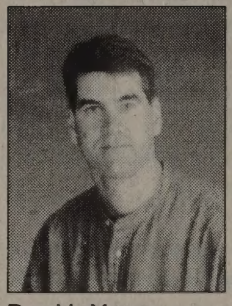
by Daryl L. Moore

It is a puzzlement. The same week that the United States Supreme Court ordered the Virginia Military Institute to admit women, Pacific Street turned a girlfriend of mine away at the door for carrying a purse the size of a pack of cigarettes.

Supposedly, this no-purse policy is gender neutral and is intended only to ensure that drugs are not brought in. Perhaps that explanation would be plausible if a sign weren't prominently placed at the entrance that says: "Women are welcome when accompanied by a gay male escort." This offensive and ridiculous statement exposes the true intent of the policy—good old-fashioned, good-ole-boy chauvinism.

The only thing as offensive as the policy itself is that, in 1996, vestiges of the "women not welcome" mentality still remain in gay nightclubs. It is a testamentary that straight men have not cornered the market on chauvinism. We in the gay community have to own up that there are pigs among us and they ought to be exposed.

Why is it that some gay men feel a need to discriminate against women even though one of our earliest supporters was the National Organization for Women. Apparently, NOW got what many gay men don't—that bigotry has one face. Early NOW members understood that discrimination against gays was no different than discrimination against women. They understood that it was wrong to exclude any group solely because of some immutable characteristic whether it be gender, race, or orientation. And, they understood that to prevail, they needed to form coalitions with other oppressed groups, and they did.



Daryl L. Moore

Many forget women's support

Twenty-plus years later, many gay men forget the support that women began providing decades ago and still do. They forget that in Houston, Kathy Whitmire was an early supporter, that Ann Richards treated us more fairly than any other governor in Texas history, and that Sheila Jackson Lee, Dianne Feinstein, and Barbara Boxer fight our battles on a national level.

I wonder what these women would think about a club policy of allowing women only if accompanied by gay men? Although surely offended, Ann Richards might laugh about the enforceability of such a ridiculous policy. She might rightly wonder, "What if a straight man escorted a woman?" "Would he be asked to prove his homosexuality at the door?" "And, if so, how?"

Likewise, I presume that Sheila Jackson Lee would be greatly offended to find "Women not welcome" posted on the door of a gay nightclub after offering her support to the gay community. Might she legitimately recall the "No blacks allowed" signs that prevented her parents from entering all-white establishments? Might she feel betrayed that a group she has openly supported seeks to exclude her because of her gender?

Finally, would these women, like I do, wonder why the owners bother with such an overtly offensive policy? Gay men, after all, generally go to clubs frequented by gay men. Lesbians go to bars generally frequented by lesbians. And heterosexuals generally frequent heterosexual establishments. Sometimes, however, there are individuals comfortable enough with their sexuality that they enjoy themselves at all three. So, unless we're willing to endorse a "separate but equal" policy for gays, lesbians, and heterosexuals, this "women not welcome" idea is not a position we should stake out or support.

After all, how would we react if we were turned away at La Strada, the ballet, or a Rockets' game because we were unaccompanied by a straight woman? We would, most of us, cry "foul" and talk about how we were being discriminated against for being gay. And we would be right.

Bigotry really does just have one ugly face. This time, the gay community is caught wearing it. And it's wrong. Foul!

Daryl L. Moore is a lawyer in Houston, Texas. He has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law.

The Quilt: D.C. '96

by Perrie L. Dolph

Every American will have a special opportunity to visit the AIDS Memorial Quilt this fall when it will be displayed in its entirety on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This event, referred to as "Quilt in the Capital," is expected to draw 750,000 people to D.C. during the Columbus Day weekend October 11-13. It will be the largest AIDS awareness event in history.

THE NAMES PROJECT
AIDS Memorial Quilt

Almost ten years have passed since the Quilt was first displayed on the National Mall in 1987. Since then, the number of Quilt panels has grown more than twenty-fold, providing one of the most dramatic reminders of the devastating impact of the AIDS pandemic. This year, the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be comprised of more than 44,000 panels.

Behind each statistic lies a personal record of life lost to AIDS. The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is a lasting and living memorial created by family, friends, and lovers who have lost loved ones to AIDS. As the number of cases increase, so too has the number of Quilt panels. Since the stitching began in 1987, the number of Quilt panels has grown to a tremendous amount.

Here at the Houston NAMES Project, we're already in full swing for the Washington display. The planning and coordination that's needed for an event of this magnitude is staggering—volunteers, management, merchandising, publicity, and the list goes on and on. From San Francisco, it will take 16 railroad cars to transport the Quilt to Washington. We will need 1,500 volunteers from our Central Region and 15,000 nationally to manage this massive undertaking.

The fact that this year's display will be 25 times larger than it was in 1987 is a terrible tragedy. When the Quilt is laid out in our nation's capital, it will cover the entire mall from the Capital to the Lincoln Memorial. The impact will not be felt only in Washington but all across America.

The Houston NAMES Project Foundation is proud to announce that two local organizations have been selected by the National Foundation to serve as Quilt unfolders in Washington. The Bering Community Service Foundation, captained by Stacie Cokinos, and The PWA Coalition of Houston Volunteer Program at Thomas Street Clinic, captained by Ray West, will join the Houston chapter as unfolding teams.

The Quilt's power lies in its ability to put a human face on nameless statistics, opening minds, changing perceptions, and eradicating prejudice, hysteria, and misinformation.

Contact Perrie Dolph, Central States Regional Volunteer Chairman, at 713/729-9662 or write to 4309 Stillbrooke Dr., Houston TX 77035 for information or volunteer forms for "DC 96." For travel information, contact the NAMES Project Travel Desk by calling 1-800-926-2631. Quilt visitors will find airfares discounted 10 percent below the published fare on TWA and five percent on United, Delta, American, US Air, and Continental.

Together, we can make a difference for those whose lives have been so cruelly cut short, while at the same time fighting fear, bigotry, and ignorance and effectively combatting AIDS.

No apologies necessary

Democratic Party record not a bit "sorry"

by Pat Gandy

One of the happier chores of my job as president of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus is to fulfill the constitutional requirement in our bylaws that we educate our members and the public regarding gay and lesbian political affairs.

Thus, I believe that two recent letters to the editor in response to Democrat Daryl Moore's column [May '96] need to have some light shone on them.

- The record of the Democratic Party on gays and lesbians is not a "sorry one," as Republican Paul Simmons wrote in the June '96 issue. Indeed, the Democratic Party's rules, platform, and resolutions have featured the words "sexual orientation" regarding the prohibition of discrimination at least since 1986 when I became active in gay and lesbian Democratic Party politics.
- Democratic Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock led the Texas Senate to a strong vote in favor of the Hate Crimes Act in 1995. Only one Republican joined his team on that vote. The rest were Democrats, and most of them conservative Democrats at that.
- Democratic Governor Ann Richards appointed openly gay and lesbian members of boards and commissions. Our own Houston person on the Real Estate Board is Mitchell Katine. Bill Scott served admirably on the Board of Health as long as he lived. Many others from throughout Texas still serve because this Democratic governor kept her promises.
- I just got back from a state Democratic Party convention where Sue Lovell and I were re-elected as state Democratic committeewomen from our respective districts. Nineteen openly gay or lesbian delegates were elected to the National Democratic Party Convention in Chicago, where we will happily serve as Clinton delegates. This is the largest number in the delegation in the history of the party in Texas. At every level, more than 200 gay men and lesbians, proudly wearing their rainbow flags on their credentials, participated in the convention process.

On the contrary, three decades of Democratic gay activity have accomplished a great deal on the state level. On a national level, the Clinton administration has registered some very solid accomplishments:

- Clinton has endorsed and promised to sign, if the Republican-controlled Congress will let it out of committee, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) making him the first sitting U.S. president to back a gay civil rights bill.
- He convened the first White House Conference on HIV and AIDS.

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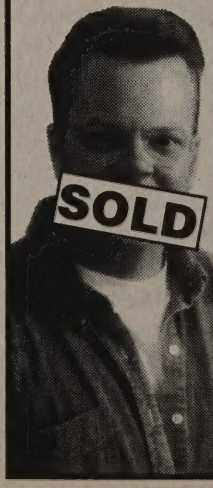

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- He has appointed more than 100 openly gay or lesbian persons to administration jobs, including Roberta Achtenberg and Bruce Lehman, the first lesbian and gay man to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate (Democrat-controlled at the time).
- He nominated open lesbian Deborah Batts to the U.S. District Court in New York, making her the first openly gay or lesbian U.S. federal judge in history.
- He helped us defeat anti-gay ballot initiatives in Oregon, Idaho, and Maine, as stated by Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign.
- He issued an executive order mandating that security clearances no longer be denied on the basis of sexual orientation in a battle fought since the '30s.
- He ordered all federal agencies to implement non-discrimination policies that included gays and lesbians.
- He changed U.S. policy to grant political asylum to people who fear persecution in their home countries because of sexual orientation.
- He has increased public health spending for HIV/AIDS by 40 percent since taking office, including a 108-percent increase for Ryan White CARE programs and a 26-percent raise for AIDS-related research.
- He has made numerous other public health decisions that impact women positively and are thus beneficial to lesbians.

Yes, there are areas of public policy in these United States that are antagonistic or outright hostile to gay men and lesbians. This is not a perfect world, Clinton is not a perfect man, nor is the Democratic Party a perfect institution. Frankly, here on earth, I do not know where that "perfect" place might be. I do know for a fact that it is not in the Republican Party of Texas that will not let gay Republicans practice free speech, nor is it in the Republican leadership of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, which thought up and sponsored the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) as a means of gay-bashing our community. At least the sins of the Democratic leadership over the past years are ones of omission and not of active commission.

Please, Republicans, do not blame liberal Democrats for a society in which hate crimes occur. There are laws against that now, just as there are laws against murder. Laws only punish—they do not change the hostility in the hearts of people. The civil rights laws punish those who commit crimes against other groups, but they have not stopped crime. That only happens when the hearts and minds of all citizens become accepting of this very diverse society of ours. It is the job of all of us—gay, straight, persons of color, religions of all kinds, Democrats, and Republicans—to get that message out.

The whole Republican Party is now firmly in control of the radical political and religious extremists, and they brag that their nominee-apparent, Bob Dole, must acquiesce to their wishes, and my guess is that he will. He probably cannot be nominated unless he does.

The choice for gay men and lesbians is clear. The re-election of President Clinton is a must. He is clearly head and shoulders above anyone in the Republican field. Every time any other candidate—and that includes Senator Dole—tries to seek out a more moderate stand, the religious political extremists have forced him back into gay-baiting.

In order to govern, a party or an individual must win. In order to win, they must put together enough votes from groups and individuals to obtain a majority of votes. In order to get a majority of votes, they must not offend a majority of voters. It's just that simple. Right now, legislators cannot be connected with approval of "sodomy," which still carries strong religious implications (as we Bible Belt Southerners well know). And while a clear majority of citizens agrees that we should not

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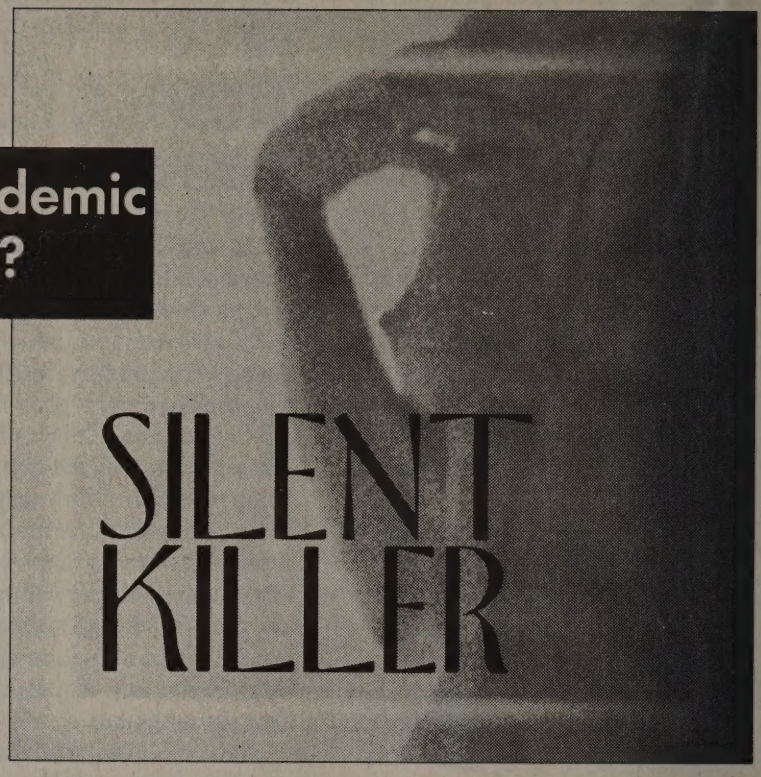
Is Breast Cancer an Epidemic in Our Community?



by Susan W. Fan, M.D.

Lesbians may have a two to three times higher risk of developing breast cancer than heterosexual women, according to epidemiologist Suzanne Haynes, Ph.D. The rate of breast cancer among heterosexuals is said to be one in nine over a lifetime; this suggests an incidence as high as one in three for lesbians. Why are lesbians at increased risk? What can we do, as a community, and as individuals, with regard to prevention and early detection? These are the main issues to be addressed in this article.

To understand why lesbians are at increased risk for breast cancer, we must identify the known risk factors and how they apply to our community. The first category of risk pertains to prolonged or continuous estrogen exposure. Early menarche (first period before age 12), late menopause (over age 55), and no pregnancies (or first pregnancy after age 30) fall into this category. There also appears to be a slight risk from hormone therapy of the type prescribed to combat the symptoms of menopause. The use of birth control pills (limited in our community) is not considered a risk. Moderate alcohol consumption and being overweight probably fall into this category because estrogen is stored in fat and broken down by the liver, but not as well in the presence of significant alcohol intake. A history of several benign breast biopsies (more than four) with a diagnosis of atypical hyperplasia is a risk, and again this process is felt to be hormonally mediated. There is a hereditary aspect to breast cancer, including an increased risk if a first-degree relative such as mother, sister, or daughter was affected. Height is a slight risk, with taller women more apt than shorter ones to develop breast cancer. Cigarette smoking, while not directly linked to an increased breast-cancer rate, lowers the body's natural immunity, as does stress.

Breast cancer prevention is an ambiguous topic. Some disease states have well-documented means of prevention. For example, smoking causes lung cancer, so if you do not smoke you can virtually prevent it. With breast cancer, we have limited preventive options. We have no control over our family or menstrual histories. There probably are not too many women who plan childbearing with the idea of warding off breast cancer. And we certainly have no control over our height. We can, however, follow the American Cancer Society's guideline for a healthy lifestyle. This includes a low-fat diet, maintenance of normal weight, not smoking, limiting alcohol intake, and following a regimen of regular aerobic exercise. We can request the lowest effective dose of post-menopausal hormone replacement. There are studies going on presently looking at the role of tamoxifen, routinely used in the treatment of breast cancer, to prevent the disease in certain individuals felt to be at high risk. Genetic testing may become available, also for high-risk persons, in the future.

If we cannot effectively prevent breast cancer, we can certainly become aggressive about early detection. When breast cancer is found in its earliest form, as minimal breast cancer, the 20-year survival is greater than 95 percent. A three-part approach is needed: mammography, breast self-examination, and annual breast physical exam by a qualified healthcare provider.

A mammogram is an X-ray examination of the breast using special-

ized equipment to image this soft-tissue structure. Mammography should only be performed at centers that are American College of Radiology-accredited, by registered technologists, and interpreted by board-certified radiologists. For women with none of the previously identified risk factors, the first mammogram should be obtained at age 40, with subsequent exams scheduled every two years until age 50 when mammograms should be done annually. A breast physical exam should be performed yearly by a healthcare professional (a general or breast surgeon for those at high risk), with breast self-exams done monthly. Women at higher risk may need a different schedule. For example, a patient at very high risk because of breast cancer in her mother, menarche at age 10, and no children may wish to be screened initially at age 35 and begin yearly followup at 40 instead of 50. If the mother's breast cancer was discovered pre-menopausal, that adds a significant additional risk, and screening mammograms should start 10 years earlier than the age the cancer was diagnosed.

Mammography is our best tool for discovering breast cancer when it is still too small to be detected during a physical exam. However, both the sensitivity and specificity of this test are less than perfect. This means that mammography does not detect all breast cancers; neither does it accurately exclude malignancy. In other words, some breast cancers can be missed; it also means that some biopsies ordered will be negative for cancer. In fact, the positive biopsy rate for breast lesions is between 20 and 40 percent. This is partly due to an overlap in the characteristic appearance of benign and malignant entities. Most radiologists and surgeons would prefer to biopsy a benign lesion than miss a small, early cancer. It also means that most biopsies are not positive for cancer and that the need for such a procedure should not be mistaken for a death sentence. Prior mammograms are critical for this reason. An abnormality—a scar from a previous biopsy, for example—seen on one study can look horribly suspicious but appear unchanged compared to mammograms from two years ago. Similarly, a patient who has had no children may have very dense, glandular breasts, making the mammogram much less sensitive to detection of disease than in a woman with fatty, involuted breasts. In such a patient, comparison exams may be the only way to detect the subtle changes of early breast cancer. For these reasons, it is best to return to the same center for every screening, so the old films will be readily available for review before the patient leaves the imaging facility. Because of insurance, or mobility, the ideal is not always possible, but every woman should remember when and where she had examinations performed, so that the films can at least be obtained later for review. I am constantly amazed at how much trouble this seems to be for some people. For some, filling out the patient-history form seems a tremendous nuisance, but that information is vital for the radiologist not only for accurate diagnosis, but also for making recommendations about future screening.

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FOR WOMEN...

Montrose Clinic now offers a low-cost gynecological clinic created to offer all women a low-cost, professional environment in which to see a specialist and receive diagnosis, lab work, treatment, and referrals of gynecological problems. The clinic is open 5 until 8 p.m. every Wednesday by appointment; call 520-2000 to schedule a visit. There is a $40 fee; however, no one is turned away for inability to pay.

The clinic will also begin the Positive Care Clinic for HIV-positive women on Wednesday, August 7, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Providing gynecological care specific to HIV-positive women, the clinic is free.

Righting the Wi

by Tristan A. MacAvery

©TOM KILTY (computer-enhanced with permission)

Warren Thompson, an Episcopal minister from Florida visiting the Mensa Annual Gathering in Houston this month, observed, "The Bible has only six references to homosexuality; it has 340 references to heterosexuality. This doesn't necessarily mean that God disapproves of heterosexuals —it just indicates that they need more supervision."

CHRISTIAN (n) — One who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

— Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

A Christian is one who follows the teachings of Christ in so far as they are not inconsistent with a life of sin.

— Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary

Any word, in any language, possesses at least two definitions: the literal, dictionary definition, which attempts to present an exact, unbiased description, and an emotional definition, which is learned and experienced individually and which provides the visceral response to the word. It is impossible to avoid the gut-level response to any descriptive or proper noun; words like Republican, Democrat, Hispanic, Caucasian, or gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight elicit emotional responses based upon the hearer's education, experience, and the context in which they appear.

The word Christian automatically brings up a variety of possible responses. For some, it represents teachings of love, acceptance, and the promise of a better life in this and the next world; for others, it may have little effect, as if it were clothing that was once worn but has since been discarded because it no longer fits or is out of style. For many in the gay community, Christian is a word that strikes fear or disgust in our hearts because it has become associated with the loud and abusive voice of a group of anti-gay people who use Christianity as their aegis and sword—a group collectively referred to as the Religious Right.

For many years, well-known members of the Religious Right, !such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, have preached an evangel of extremism and intolerance toward any people or practice which they feel is not sanctioned by God through the words of the Bible. According to their interpretations, homosexuality is not merely not to be tolerated; it is an "abomination" that must be destroyed. "There is no such thing as homosexuality among children or the animal kingdom," Jimmy Swaggart once said. "Homosexuality is the worst sin; he who defiles the temple of God—one's own body—him shall God destroy." From this perspective, all attacks against homosexuality—including bashing and AIDS—are simply God's will being fulfilled.

Swaggart's quote is wrong on all counts, as are the similar views espoused by other religious extremists, and this message is

ongs of the "Right"

slowly but steadily being chorused, louder and louder, by Christian churches tired of being tarred with the brush of the Religious Right. More and more people, clergy, churches, and Christian organizations are actively working to dispel the notion that, as Richard Le Gallienne put it, "Organized Christianity has probably done more to retard the ideals that were its founders' than any other agency in the world."

"As with the Christian religion, the worst advertisement for Socialism is its adherents."

— George Orwell (1937)

The pervasive and poisonous messages of the Religious Right have taken their toll on many people, especially those in the gay community. "We get individuals in this parish who look shell-shocked," says the Reverend Christine Franke, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Montrose, shaking her head in bewilderment. "They're looking for a church, perhaps having found us through the Gay & Lesbian Yellow Pages, or through another gay resource, and you can read in their faces that they fear that they are actually hated by God. They are hated by some conservative people with closed minds, not by God."

Slowly, an outreach ministry in many Christian denominations is inviting these spiritually wounded into their churches. "We're glad when people walk in the door and we get a chance to speak to them," Franke says. "We are not the Religious Right. In fact, most of us aren't. I can't understand how the Religious Right would misuse the word and grace of God in that way. It's a horrible misuse. I'm not sure how they justify it."

"Our goal is to establish dialogues, to welcome rather than exclude," observes Laura Bourdo, Franke's assistant. "We're trying to avoid getting into, for lack of a more theological term, pissing matches."

"If you're searching for Biblical sources against homosexuality," Franke notes, "you won't find them in the words of Jesus. The Religious Right talks about it being such a hateful subject to God, but you really have to hunt for even the mention of homosexuality. On the other hand, all over the place are admonitions about love, about avoiding greed and pride, and so on. Maybe they should be looking at things more openly instead of through a microscope. If they are basing their claims on the laws of Leviticus, then the Religious Right is breaking any number of other laws in that section. The worst offense that they commit is taking things out of context. You can't be a cafeteria Christian. If you take part of it, you have to take it all."

"One truly Christian life will do more to prove the divine origin of Christianity than many lectures. It is of much greater importance to develop Christian character than to exhibit Christian evidences."

— J. M. Gibson, Scot./Eng./Can./Am. clergyman (1838-?)

In the office of the Reverend Sally Fox of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Montrose is a poster of Jesus with the caption, He died to take away your sins, not your mind. "We are not a 'b!anner-waving gay church,'" Fox notes, "and I don't believe that most gay people who come here would want that. We are a very inclusive church. I don't even have a good idea of what percentage of our congregation is gay, because we simply don't think of our congretagion in separate

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Devotional Thought for the Month by Rev. Janet Parker

Have you ever wondered why people are quick to blame God for everything, especially when life is very difficult? Does the reverse happen? Are people quick to respond to God when things are going extremely well? Are the praises and thanks being offered up to God? My question to you is, "Are we a conditional people? Are we a fair-weather child?" When things are great, God is great. When things are miserable, God is a failure and a deadbeat.

Job had to face his own attitude when life dealt him a series of terrible blows. He looked God squarely in the eye and said, "I know that I am a righteous person. I do not deserve what has happened to me." Once he stated what he felt, he stood fast in that belief. He didn't blame God. He simply told God how he felt. Job did not know why he was being tested and tormented. He waited on God to give him more information. It wasn't enough for Job to wrestle with the question "why?" Now his friends came around to hound him about the situation. His friends told him he must have been involved in sin, or done some terrible wrong to have received such punishment. He obviously was due the sickness, grief and loss that came his way.

When adversity comes your way, what do you do? Do you work it out with God? Do you consult all of your friends and get their opinions? Here is a good plan of action. First, take census of your life. How is your relationship with God? Is everything okay? Have you been faithful to God? If so, move on to the next evaluation technique. Secondly, "How is your relationship with the people in your life?" Are you in right relationship with the significant people in your life? It is always good to deal with any unforgiveness, and confess any wrongdoing. It cleans the slate. Thirdly, you must ask yourself, "Is there any good reason why these trials are coming my way?" If you cannot see the "why" of it all, then you must look at your enemy as an instigator of these trials.

Many people do not realize that Satan is like a roaring lion, full of lies, and ready to steal, kill and destroy God's plan for your life. Obstacles come our way to block and hinder what God has for us. Many people have prayed, only to have the prayers blocked because of evil influence. Of course, God is always stronger and able to get help to us. God may have intended to help us right away. Occasionally, there are heavenly battles fought on our behalf. If we wait patiently we will see our battles won through the power of prayer. No matter what happens to us, God has promised never to leave or forsake us.

What you and I need to do is to realize who our real enemy is, and not fight against the One who can deliver, heal, restore and set us free. If we remain blinded we may never get past our own frustration. It is the enemy's plan to isolate us, to fill us with fear, to discourage and depress us. If you think this is from God, then you have been deceived. One of the prophets, Jeremiah, who found himself in the midst of captivity, away from home, and in the enemy's camp received this word from God which I give to you: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and I will bring you back from captivity." (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

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chunks. We are people, a great variety of people who work, play, and pray together. If I were to select any distinctive characteristic of our gay and lesbian members, it would be that they go out of their way to help."

Fox mentions a young man who helps a woman in her mid-80s attend church regularly. He picks her up at her home, drives to the church, escorts her to the front row, and goes back to sit with his other friends for the service. During communion, he helps the woman to the rail—she is determined to walk forward and kneel with the others for as long as she is able. He shares the grace with her, they share their faith together, and he later takes her home again. In another case, a young man lay dying of AIDS in a hospice bed, and at his side sat a woman of some 90 years who kept vigil at his side for days on end. She took meals there, staying with him, refusing to leave in case there was something she could do for him, even if it were just to hold his hand.

"This is the service, the caring, that our congregation has for one another." Fox reflects for a moment. "I've known people who have told me that they thought they would never 'darken the door of a church again,' but they felt our group was totally different from what they had previously known. Here, people are accepted for who they are, for their special gifts, for their special selves."

On the sign outside the church are the words AIDS Spoken Here. "We are careful to emphasize that AIDS is not a 'gay disease,' but there are a large number of PWAs in this area who happen to be gay," Fox says. "They are not singled out, not by sexuality nor by their illness. They are prayed for, individually by first name, at each Sunday service, and they are on our minds and in our hearts. We have volunteers and helpers to take them out to lunch, help them find resources, give them moral and social support. We are not officially connected to Milam House, but three members of our church created the hospice." Fox was herself director there for two years.

"There's not much practical Christianity in the man who lives on better terms with angels and seraphs, than with his children, servants, and neighbors."

— H. W. Beecher, American clergyman (1813-1887)

Swaggart's misconception that "there is no such thing as homosexuality among children" particular concerns Don Carlson, the senior pastor of Zion Lutheran and co-director of the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH). "I'm getting my doctor of ministry, with my area of focus being sexual minority youth, a term which covers the whole laundry

Continued on page 64

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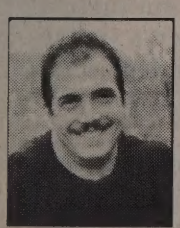

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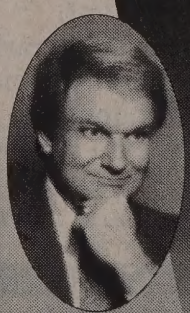

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A CONVERSATION WITH

melissa manchester

by Blase DiStefano

"Midnight Blue," "Don't Cry Out Loud," "Whenever I Call You Friend," and "You Should Hear How She Talks About You," for which she won the 1982 Grammy Award for Best Female Vocalist, are reason enough to appreciate Melissa Manchester's talent.

However, more reasons abound: two years before her Grammy win, she had become the first artist in the history of the Academy Awards to have two nominated movie themes in a given year (*Ice Castles* and *Promise*); recently, she combined her singing and acting talents in a recurring role on the hit TV series, *Blossom*; this spring, her first musical entitled *I Sent a Letter to My Love* will have its world premiere in Chicago; she plays every AIDS benefit her time allows; she is presently composing the score for the new Disney animated feature, *The Lady and the Tramp II*; and she is now touring with *Andrew Lloyd Webber—Music of the Night*! In *Music of the Night*, she sings songs from *Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita, Cats, The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Sunset Boulevard*, to name a few.

If you're involved with the world premiere of your first musical, *and* you're presently composing the score for Disney's *Tramp II, and* you're touring with *Music of the Night*...
and I have two kids at home...
No!
Yeah.
For crying out loud, can you tell me how you're even taking the time to talk to me!?
I don't know. The thing is I have nothing to compare it to. I was raised by a mom who was sort of the same as me, and my dad worked as a musician with the Met Opera. He was a guy who went to work at night, frequently home during the day—went to work in a tuxedo and wasn't a waiter. My mother was a successful designer, and my sister and I were just raised in a very creative busy household.
I know you were a backup singer for Bette Midler. Is that how you got your start?
No, I was a staff writer for a music company when I was 17, and before that I did different jobs. I made a good living singing commercials.
Was this for TV and radio?
Yes. And I parked cars and I was an usherette, and I was in street theater.

JOAN MARCUS

Did you like it?

That's nice, 'cause now this is how you live, it's not like a big deal one way or the other.

Well, a tour like this, which I don't do that often, is certainly a big deal. But in the main, no, no, no, my kids think that our life is normal.

Speaking of "normal," were you as lucky as Bette to sing in the middle of towel-clad guys in the middle of New York's Continental Baths?

Well, you know, the funny thing was that Bette and I were working in different clubs on the same street. She was working at the Continental Baths, and I was working at a club up the street called The Focus. She and Barry Manilow were working together, and I had worked with Barry many times in the studio. Bette was never a studio singer; she only had this fantasy picture of what a background singer was. So she and Barry came up to see me on one of her nights off, and this was at the beginning of her career. She was getting ready to do her first Carnegie Hall concert. So knowing as much as I did about background singing, after my set was done, I went over and talked to her for a while, and I told her how excited and happy I was for her, and I asked her if she was thinking of using background singers. She took a beat and she said, "No, would you like to sing in back of me?" I said, "No, I'd like to sing *instead* of you...meantime, I'd be happy to sing in back of you." We sang together for six months.

Melissa Manchester singing backup for Bette Midler in the 1991 film, *For the Boys*. Manchester was one of Midler's original backup singers (The Harlettes) about 20 years earlier!

Then you sang backup, obviously much later, in the movie *For the Boys*. Was it sort of like old times?

It was great. We've stayed in touch, and that's nice. It was very sweet.

Another Bette-related question: She's got a large gay following—are you aware that you have a lot of gay and lesbian fans?

Yes, yes. And I'm really grateful.

So, where do you keep your Grammy?

I keep my Grammy on a shelf in my little studio.

Like a musical studio?

It's really just a little office. I still write on a plain old upright. I don't know anything about electronic equipment except where the on and off button is.

So, you don't use a computer...

No, I just write.

Tell me a little bit about *I Sent a Letter to My Love*.

It's a chamber piece, a five-character musical. It's about a brother and sister who live in Maine during the 1950s, and she takes care of her brother because he has polio. It's a very wonderful bittersweet story based on Bernice Rubin's novel of the same title. Then that book became a French film in 1974, starring Simone Signoret. It's a gorgeous, gorgeous story.

It opens this spring. Have you already planned what you're gonna wear on opening night?

No, but I am wearing the most gorgeous gowns I have ever worn in my life for *Music of the Night*. Really princess gowns.

How many changes?

I think it's six. Really divine. I get to play diva and just waft through.

Tell me a little bit about how *Music* came about.

This is my second collaboration with Sir Andrew. Nine years ago, I starred in the national touring company of *Song and Dance*. This came about during the summer break for my kids, so it was an okay time to do it. It's an evening of highlights of all of this large music that America has just fallen giddy over. I'm singing a bunch of songs that everybody knows; you know, I barely have to sell it. And the company is wonderfully talented. And the luxury is that we're touring with this 32-piece orchestra, just deluxe. They've all been doing this for about a year, but I've just stepped into it. It's glitzy and musical and very textural and very satisfying.

Speaking of glitz, the elections are coming up. Are you voting for Clinton or Dole?

Clinton. You know, his wife's mentor is Marion Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund. She's a magnificent woman, magnificent. As a matter of fact,

Continued on page 61

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HIV Outlasting

A LONG-TERM SURVIVOR COMES TO TERMS WITH ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

by Roy Oakes

For most of my 13 years of living with HIV, I've sought to fend off my "inevitable" slide into full-blown AIDS. I haven't had a single opportunistic infection, but my CD4 count has fluctuated wildly. I've considered myself variously a dinosaur, a crusader, a pariah, a champion, lucky, or doomed. Now, I am just plain curious as to why I'm still alive. And I know I'm not alone in my wonder. How is it that some of us survive and others—like my lover, James—succumb? Is there really one thing we do that keeps us alive? In my own quest, I've returned twice to alternative therapies to help manage this thing called AIDS, and I've had to come to terms with my feelings about conventional medicine.

I remember the early days of the pandemic in Houston, when fear motivated many of us to dig deeper into the sands of denial while at the same time creating organizations to help our brothers in need. Scant federal funding for services, prevention, and education was forthcoming (I still have a hard time forgiving the Republican leaders who maintained the status quo for so many years). Meanwhile, we continued to party while struggling to incorporate emerging safe-sex guidelines into our lives. It was a terrifying time, fraught with confusing theories, puzzling treatment protocols, and little hope.

As the years wore on and the body count reached ridiculous proportions, I assumed I'd be added to the heap. I'd lived the full life, after all, replete with innumerable sex partners, massive quantities of drugs, and questionable dietary and exercise programs. My work life was equally full. As a rising authority in the computer security field, I spoke with technological finesse at national conferences, consulted with formidable corporations and global institutions, and was quoted as an expert in trade magazine articles. In short, I burned the candle at both ends.

By 1988, when James and I had been living in New York City a couple of years—a move precipitated by the belief that our time together would be cut short by my death—my CD4 count had dropped to 80. I only suffered from frequent bronchitis and marveled—not too

loudly, lest I call the attention of the gods to my good fortune—that I continued to avoid the dreaded opportunistic infections. I ignored the severe depression, precipitated by the AIDS deaths of more than 60 friends in Houston and by the suicide of my sister in 1986. And while I steadfastly refused conventional medical treatment, I didn't pursue a program of alternative therapy. I was, frankly, in a funk.

Then, while I was hospitalized for bronchitis in early 1988, a friend brought me material that suggested ways of managing HIV by using a variety of alternative therapies. I hadn't considered that possibility, since it wasn't part of the mainstream propaganda that focused on the eradication of HIV as our only and best hope. But something in the theory of disease management resonated for me. Two aspects of my past paved the way for this revelation.

The first was my upbringing, which included time split between Texas and Germany due to the homesickness my German mother felt from time to time. I learned that the German model of healthcare continued to embrace centuries-old traditions of herbology and the relatively newer homeopathic and allopathic principles. Greater emphasis was placed on an individual's responsibility for wellness, and prevention rather than intervention was preferred. More holistic, non-invasive methods of correcting illness were encouraged. Visits to the apothecary, where knowledgeable staff dispensed time-honored herbal and medical formulas, were the first line of defense. This was quite unlike our American model, where treatments prior to pills, injections, and surgery have been labeled outdated, witchcraft, barbaric, heresy. In America, I was taught that whenever I was ill I should run to the doctor to get a fix. Antibiotics were handed out like candy for ailments as simple as a cold, personal accountability was an afterthought, and doctors were invincible.

The second aspect had to do with the lessons I had learned as a young adult in the late '60s. Before coming out, I'd lived in a commune with my wife. I'd been a champion of pesticide-free organic gardening and vegetarianism. I drank chamomile tea, meditated, and sat in yogic postures for hours marveling at the truth about navel fuzz. When I came out, I made a break from all of that.

But AIDS caught me off guard, and I hadn't thought to connect either aspect of my past with the present—until I lay, despondent, in that New York hospital. I voraciously read every article my friend brought, brushing away the cobwebs of forgetfulness. It was the first of my life-defining moments in re-lation to AIDS. I determined to drop the script of HIV=AIDS=death we'd been asked to accept and decided to explore those parts of my roots that just might pull me out of the quagmire.

It wasn't easy. It meant going against the grain of all we'd been led to believe about HIV and AIDS. And yet it was easy, because I'd never fully bought into the logic espoused by conventional medicine: for instance, taking AZT, that cancer drug first developed in the '60s and then promptly banned because of its toxicity. Take something for immune suppression that suppresses the immune system? Not me. Before that hospital stay, I'd tried aerosol pentamadine a few times, but taking something to protect my lungs that then impaired breathing for days afterward did not make sense either. I drew the line, much to the chagrin of my doctors, who predicted—solemnly, with aggravation—that I would die within a couple of years.

> I'VE CONSIDERED MYSELF VARIOUSLY A DINOSAUR, A CRUSADER, A PARIAH, A CHAMPION, LUCKY, OR DOOMED. NOW, I AM JUST PLAIN CURIOUS AS TO WHY I'M STILL ALIVE.

When I emerged from the hospital, I sought an herbalist, who prescribed a tea with ingredients purported to stimulate the immune system. That led to a study of other immune-boosting herbs. I started to look at my diet and became aware of more healthful ways of eating. I read Dr. Laurence Badgley's *Healing AIDS Naturally* and selected those supplements and therapies that resonated for me. I found a homeopathic doctor, who worked on strengthening my constitution. I indulged in weekly massage therapy. I even started to meditate again and revived a rigorous hatha yoga practice.

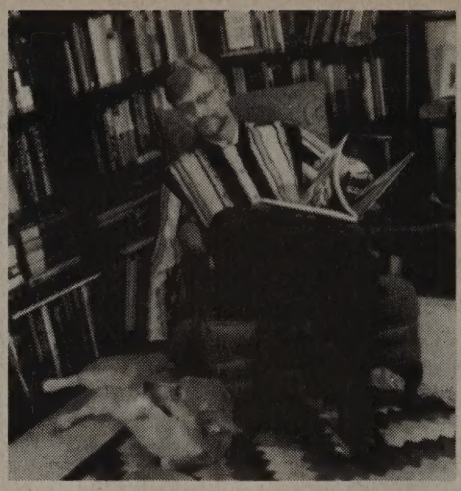
And James and I, battle weary from careers that limited quality time together (his as an assistant to a fashion designer, mine as a computer security manager on Wall Street) decided to return to Texas and explore the possibility of starting a Mexican import business. Before moving to San Antonio, where we found less stressful jobs, my CD4 count rose to nearly 700. I swaggered under the weight of my newfound power. But the euphoria was short-lived.

In San Antonio, James was diagnosed with AIDS, and he too refused conventional treatment. "I wasn't aware that soothsaying was part of the medical curriculum," I railed at the doctor who told James he had less than a year to live. But James, less committed to the holistic regimen I followed, created his own program of maintenance. It was meager consolation that he lived

years beyond the statistical expectations for someone with Kaposi's sarcoma, which he eventually developed. As he lay dying, he alluded to that doctor's erroneous prediction with something akin to bittersweet revenge.

After James' diagnosis, we returned to Houston—I to a computer security job to help pay for the increasingly expensive alternative therapies, he to display work at Neiman's. I was initially steadfast in my program; he was less so. We had our arguments, but I came to accept his choice and learned the meaning of unconditional love. Increasingly, I grew to hate the medical establishment that scorned our choices. James and I grew isolated from our few remaining friends and made fewer new ones. By the time he died, and for a couple of years after, I was once more deep in depression and less willing to continue my program. My CD4 count plummeted again. Last year, with my naturopathic doctor's encouragement and support, I filed for disability and moved to New Mexico to review my options.

It's strange how well we learn to move through life, oblivious to the impact of our choices. I hadn't realized how important claiming control of my life those many years ago had been until I attended an AIDS, Medicine and Miracles conference earli-



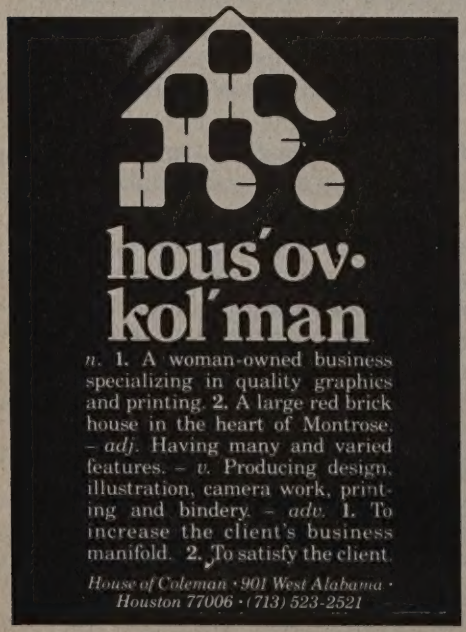
er this year. Ostensibly, I went to gather information for a book I am writing about my experiences with HIV and alternative therapies. I grudgingly accepted the fact that I'd have to listen to representatives from the very medical establishment I'd come to despise and that I'd have to participate in touchy-feely "processes" geared to melt my frozen heart. Figuring I had nothing to lose, I gave myself over fully to the experience. It would be my second life-defining moment in relation to AIDS.

I finally got it. I am a long-term survivor, and there is a reason for this alternative- versus conventional-therapy controversy. I felt in the core of my being that finding a cure for AIDS, whether alternative or mainstream, was not the point at all. Living life to the fullest was the point. I met many people who utilized both alternative treatments and mainstream protocols and were surviving. This caused me to re-examine my hatred of mainstream medicine. Was there a common thread to survival?

A friend of mine in Taos has used conventional drugs for HIV for over 11 years. He hikes, canoes, goes camping, lectures on AIDS in public schools, likes to dance, and is, like me, looking for love. We agree that we are alive not because of our treatment choices but because of our attitudes. The power of the mind to heal is slowly gaining credence in the scientific community. I'm just now beginning to appreciate the role my attitude has played in my longevity. And I'm fortunate to have found an HIV/AIDS doctor accepting of and knowledgeable about the alternative therapies I prefer.

We are increasingly bombarded with a plethora of choices about this HIV/AIDS condition and ways to manage it. I've gone in and out of certainty about my choices over the past decade and a half. I've followed this and that advice. In writing this series, my intent is not to prescribe the latest rave, the final cure, or the one thing you need to do to make it all come out right. While I continue to lean toward the so-called alternative options, I increasingly believe that an active dialogue about all of the possibilities and the roles our attitudes play in the choices we make are crucial to surviving HIV. It's the only thing that approaches making sense to me anymore. ▼

Former Houstonian Roy Oakes lives in Taos, New Mexico, where he is pursuing a writing career.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Caring for Another in Crisis Time

Preplanning can ease the burden on both caregiver and loved one

by Connie Moore

From time to time we are called upon to assist a client with the scary task of caring for an elderly person, usually a parent, who is no longer able to make everyday decisions about either financial or personal needs. Sometimes this task also takes the form of caring for a friend or significant other who has become ill. Although many chores can be handled easily without any special authority, some require legal handling. The options available to the caregiver usually depend on advance planning or on the level of mental competence of the elderly or ill person.

Usually a caregiver faces making important decisions about health care, including choices about a doctor, hospice, or assisted living facility. The caregiver is also frequently called upon to take charge of finances, including money management, and routine bill paying. But more complicated situations can arise, creating a need for either better planning or court intervention. What happens if the caregiver needs to sell an unused automobile to avoid unnecessary depreciation and insurance costs? Who has the authority to make a claim for benefits from an insurance company or to trace a missing social security check? What if the caregiver is not a blood relative of the incapacitated person?

Although many chores can be handled easily without any special authority, some require legal handling.

If the incapacitated person has taken no steps toward planning for these events, the only option for the caregiver may be to seek a legal guardianship. In Texas, a qualified individual may be appointed a guardian of the person, a guardian of the estate, or both. The powers and duties of guardians of the person include the right to have physical possession of the ward and to establish the ward's legal domicile, the duty to care, to protect, and to provide the ward with clothing, food, medical care, and shelter. The powers also include the ability to consent to medical, psychiatric, and surgical treatment other than in-patient psychiatric commitment. A guardian of the estate is entitled to the possession and management of all the property belonging to the ward as governed by the provisions of the Texas Probate Code. There are substantial restrictions and expenses involved with a court controlled guardianships. Guardianship is the least flexible and attractive option for most incapacitated persons.

Connie Moore

Most individuals desire to maintain control over their own lives for as long as possible. A little advance planning can make this happen and ease the transition when incapacity strikes. With a simple general durable power of attorney a person can

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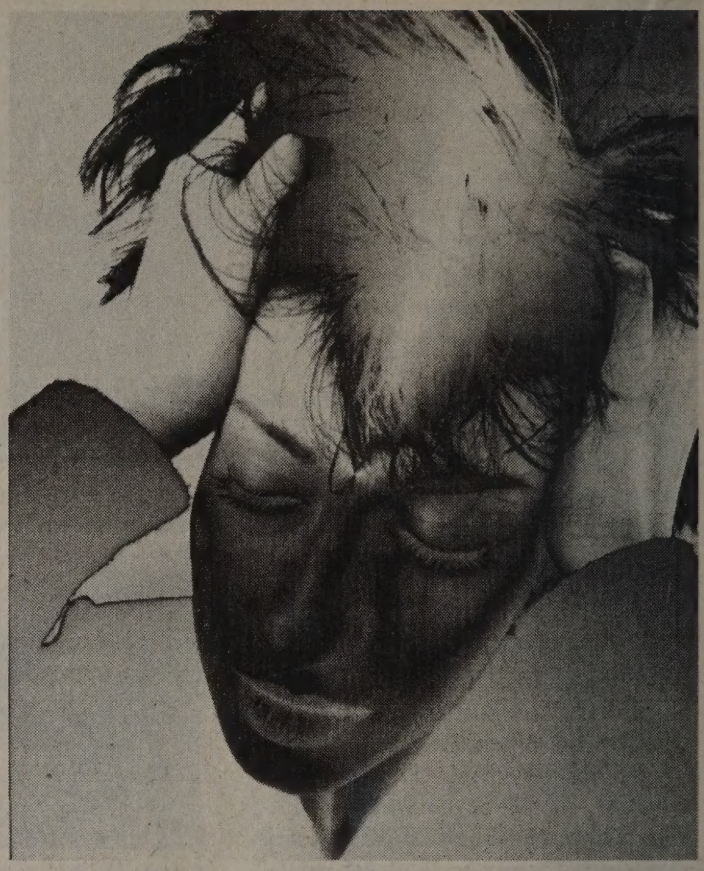
No Yuppie Flu Jokes

One woman's battle with Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome

By Lacey L. Lewis



Does Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) make me sound crazy? Probably. Does it make me feel nuts? Definitely. Is this illness all in my head, simply a variety of unrelated psychosomatic complaints by an attention-seeking, hysterical female? Absolutely not. That, however, is the unfortunate general consensus of many in the medical field and among my friends and family. If the old saying that crisis promotes growth is true, then I must be an emotional giant.

I was diagnosed about 18 months ago after a brief bout of mono. I began to sleep approximately 16 out of every 24 hours. There were days when reaching for a glass of water required more energy than I could muster. I often had to sit down in the shower because just attempting to wash my hair made my arms weak. I was lost in a sea of migraine headaches that darkened my vision and washed me away in a constant wave of nausea and vomiting. Noise tormented me, and movement exhausted me to a point at which I was nearly comatose for days on end. I was in constant agony, my bones and joints ached, my muscles screamed out in a defiant kind of pain that could not endure any type of physical activity. I couldn't eat, and my body demanded sleep that brought no rest. I had a constant sore throat and swollen glands. In a year's period of time I was hospitalized seven times and made countless visits to the emergency room, aside from the times the paramedics made visits to my home. I think I would have needed to feel better to die.

As if the disease did not cause enough grief, then the medical profession picked up where the physical pain left off. I was advised that nothing was wrong with me, that I was probably depressed or was experiencing some hormonal-based change of life. The sicker I got, the more my complaints were discounted.

Physically, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt, I sought out one last opinion. I was diagnosed by Patrcia Salvato, perhaps better known in the community as the AIDS specialist, as having Chronic Fatigue Immune

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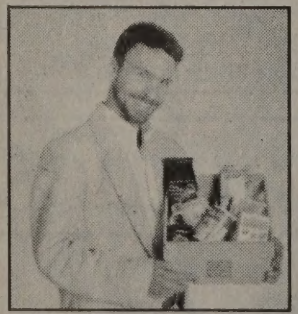

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Dysfunction Syndrome. I was elated. There was a name for the horror I had been living with for the last six months. I felt validated and vindicated. I wanted to wear a sign around my neck or rent a billboard proclaiming, "I, Lacey Lewis, have a *real,* not an imagined, disease."

My elation was short-lived. CFIDS is a poorly understood illness surrounded by controversy and confusion. When physicians or the public don't understand an illness, they often blame the patient or hide their lack of knowledge by labeling the disease as psychosomatic. It is difficult enough to accept an illness that has a thousand different symptoms, but the clincher for most people is that patients may not look sick. Since they may appear healthy, and their symptoms, as well as their energy, wax and wane, their CFIDS can be perceived as a selective illness claimed by lazy people who want to shirk their duties and responsibilities.

Continued on page 69

Probably the most damaging factor is the name "chronic fatigue" itself. If I have heard it once, I have heard this a thousand times, "I'm tired all the time—I bet I have CFIDS, too." Their assumption being, that if you are tired, then all you need is little rest and you will be good as new in no time.

Still, PWCs (People with CFIDS) have survived despite the skepticism. And, finally, the medical community has legitimized CFIDS. The Center for Disease Control states that CFIDS is a widespread and severe disease reaching epidemic proportions in this country alone. This does not take into account the millions that are affected in other countries around the world.

Let's take a look at the common myths and misunderstandings about PWCs:

Myth: CFIDS is a yuppie illness that is based upon being a hypochondriac seeking attention.

Fact: CDC officials have recently added CFIDS to the list of Priority1 New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, second only to E. Coli and Tuberculosis.

Myth: CFIDS is an illness limited to bored young white females with high incomes who will quickly recover.

Fact: The CDC estimates that between 76 and 220 per 100,000 Americans have CFIDS. The illness

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The examined life

The Church of Mr. Right

by Tom Moon

George Bernard Shaw once said, "There are two great disappointments in life: not getting what you want, and getting it." This observation reminds me of the two most common questions I hear from gay men. The first is, "How can I find a lover?" and the second, once they find one, is "What do I do about this jerk?" It seems that we begin nothing with more excitement and hope than love, and that nothing is more consistently a source of disappointment, bitterness, and suffering.

The dominant religion in America is not Christianity, but romantic love. Popular music sings about it with a fervor and in a language once reserved for religious devotion. (You are my all and everything, our love is perfect and eternal, etc.) It may be that gay people develop a particularly intense form of this religion in response to the isolation and loneliness we so often endure as adolescents. I know that I sustained hope through my own closeted and frightened teenage years by living on the hope of finding Mr. Right, the ideal and loving man who would one day rescue me from a cold, hateful world.

The trouble is that all too often we expect love relationships to conform to our most improbable romantic fantasies, and disappointment follows.

Mr. Right is my soul mate—the one human being on the planet who was specially created to meet all my needs. Of course he will be perfect in bed, but he will also understand me completely, love me unconditionally, forgive all my shortcomings, and always know exactly what I feel and want without my ever having to tell him. Mr. Right, in short, is Mother—with a big dick.

It is interesting how often our criteria for Mr. Right are impossibly self-contradictory. One man told me, sadly, "I'm looking for a mature, settled, professionally established, well-to-do, emotionally balanced nineteen-year-old." A friend told me he dreams of a "straight acting man"—by which he means a tough, macho, insensitive, blue collar-brute—who will caress and love and take care of him with perfect tenderness. Our fantasies are fantasies: They are fine so long as we don't expect reality to conform to them.

The trouble is that all too often we do expect love relationships to conform to our most improbable romantic fantasies, and disappointment follows. In most love affairs which last more than a few weeks, there is an inevitable crisis, in which both parties "fall out" of romantic love, because they can no longer ignore the mounting evidence that the partner is not Mr. Right, but a mere mortal. This crisis offers the opportunity to learn to stand in love—to let go of the fantasy elements of the relationship and commit to a partnership with a real human being. But standing in love is too dull and mundane for many. The agony and ecstasy of falling in love is like a drug—some people just can't get enough of it. The result is often an endless succession of brief love affairs which end abruptly the

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moment reality rears its ugly head. This is one of the destructive effects of the religion of Mr. Right.

Another destructive consequence is that true believers in this religion tend to neglect all other aspects of their lives in the pursuit of this one pleasure. It is as if no other satisfaction in life—friendship, career, travel, service, learning, play, athletics, community involvement, spiritual life—is of any value if the lover is absent. One of the chief tenets of this religion is that we are not really alive until romantic love touches us. When people passionately believe this, they quite logically neglect all other parts of their lives. They become impoverished, one-dimensional, and, ironically, less and less attractive to potential partners. A steady diet of romanticism can lead to emotional and spiritual malnutrition.

The dominant religion in America is not Christianity, but romantic love. Popular music sings about it with a fervor...

I often hear gay men say, "I can't find a relationship," when in fact they have many relationships with long-standing and valued friends. But these relationships don't count—love must be romantic love or it isn't a "relationship." Many a gay

Continued on page 62

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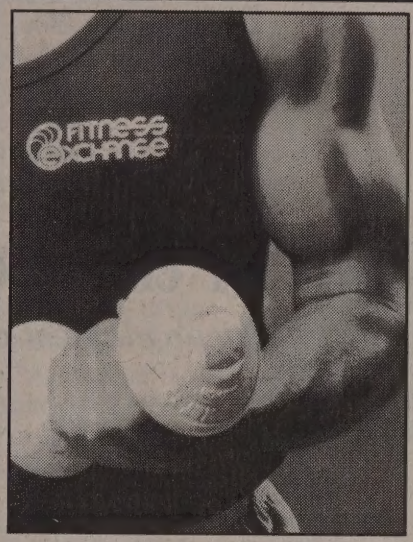

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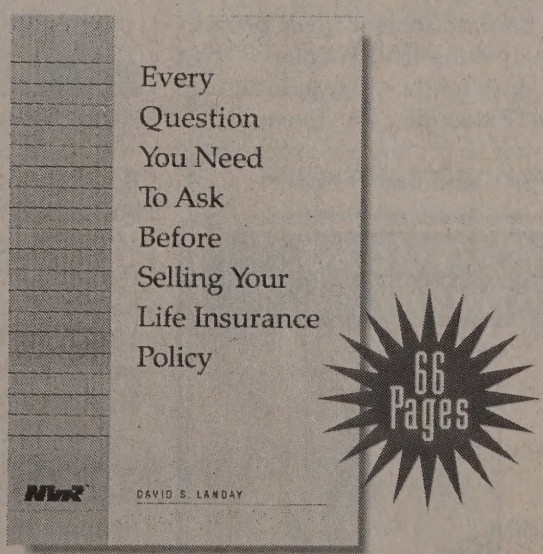

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Tired of the beaches?

Consider Mexico's magical colonial cities...

by Sandra Wilkins

Let's face it: Our friend Mexico sits on our back porch, and most of us have enjoyed great beach vacations at Acapulco, Cancun, Cozumel, Puerto Vallarta, etc. Unfortunately, few of us have bothered to experience the wealth of beauty, culture, and history contained in Mexico's interior, colonial towns, and cities.

The names alone of these places conjure up delightful visions .... San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Morelia, Patzcuaro, Zacatecas. Remember to pronounce every vowel in Spanish, and like Humbert Humbert of *Lolita* fame, let the words "trip off the tip of your tongue," as you begin ruminating about a different kind of Mexico vacation.

Sandra Wilkins

Mexico was home to one of the highest civilizations on the North American continent, as early as 1000 B.C. In that year the Olmec culture built La Venta; in 250 B.C., the city of Tiotihuacan, with its impressive Pyramid of the Sun was at the height of its development; and in 1325 A.D., the city of Tenochtitlan was founded, the present site of Mexico City.

Less than 200 years after the founding of Tenochtitlan, here comes Hernan Cortes and the Spanish to begin their conquest of Mexico. By 1521 the Olmec and other early cultures had all but disappeared, and the entire country was under Spanish rule. At this juncture in history, the building of Mexico's beautiful colonial cities was begun, many at or near the sites of those once proud, ancient cities. The Spanish discovered vast stores of silver in the hills surrounding much of this area, which led to heavy colonization.

San Miguel de Allende is a fairly well-kept secret and enjoys a growing cadre of aficionados who have discovered its charm. In the late 1930s an American named Stirling Dickinson worked with some local residents to found an art school. Now called the Instituto Allende, it enjoys a good reputation and offers short courses for visitors. San Miguel is a haven for artists and writers, and many expatriates are happy to call it home.

Declared a national monument in 1926, San Miguel's streets are lined with 18th-century mansions, fountains, monuments, and churches, reminders of the city's illustrious, and sometimes notorious, past. Once headquarters of the Spanish Inquisition, San Miguel was also home of the first audacious steps toward independence from Spain, led by Ignacio Allende and Father Miguel Hidalgo.

San Miguel can be reached by car from Mexico City in four hours, but more scenic and relaxing is the daily first-class train service, which costs $60 roundtrip. This delightful

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town is best navigated by foot, keeping in mind the 1,870-meter altitude and the rough cobblestone pavements. Most of the historic sights are clustered in the downtown area, easily covered in a couple of hours. In walking, you may come across a library or a school housed in refurbished old rooms around serene old patios or a bouncing Churrigueresque façade, like that of the Church of San Francisco.

Accommodations are part of the treat of San Miguel, with several converted haciendas serving as bed and breakfast operations, and moderately priced. Gay and lesbian visitors will be welcomed, but remember you are traveling in Mexico, a Catholic and somewhat conservative country, so no holding hands or kissing in public would be wise.

South of San Miguel is the state of Michoacan, home to the lovely towns of Morelia and Patzcuaro. Like San Miguel, Morelia is home to writers, artists, philosophers, and poets. Boasting wide boulevards, with earth-tone colonial mansions, Morelia takes on a bit of European flair with its many outdoor cafes. It is a restrained town—from its beginning, a town of intellectual endeavor and elevated tastes. Among its numerous Colonial treasures are the university, and the church and convent of Las Rosas. As in all colonial towns, the best thing to do in Morelia is walk in it. Get to the central square bordered by wide arcades, one side of which has cafes with bright tablecloths, another is bordered by a handsome pedestrian mall. The cathedral is considered by the cognoscenti to be the most beautiful in Mexico—reserved, well-balanced, subtly aristocratic.

The calm, the climate, and the intrinsic charms of Morelia make it an ideal spot to absorb Mexico's colonial flavor. Morelia is also the proud possessor of one of the most engaging inns in all of Mexico, the Villa Montana in the hills of Santa Maria, a few minutes from

Continued on page 68

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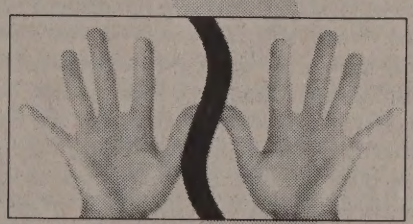

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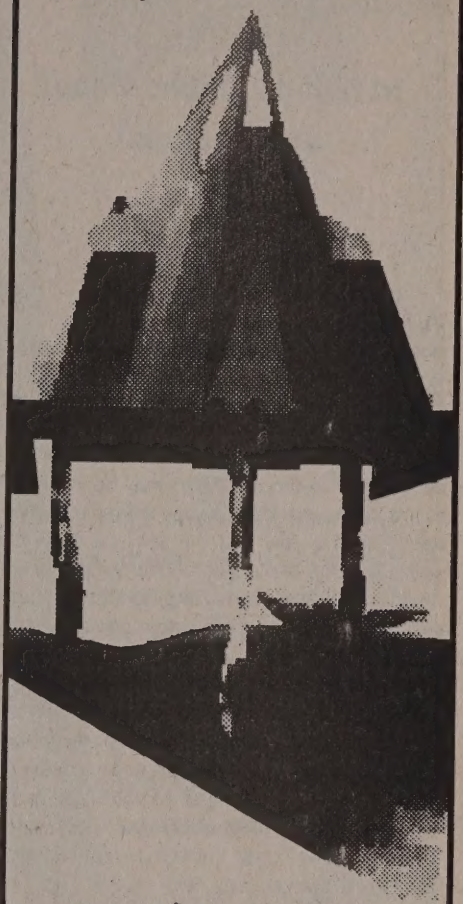

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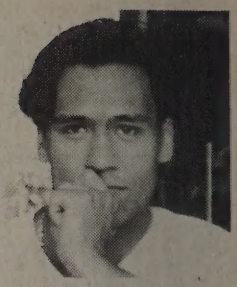


by Joseph Molina

AIRES

A major cycle is occurring in Aires! Energies are strong and confusing. Some Aires will experience confrontations with individuals who come across as "holier than thou." Others may be intolerant to other's demands, viewing things egocentrically. You may feel that the Self you show the world is being challenged by the weight of the world, but if you stay strong during this cycle, keeping compassion both within you and in the way you deal with people, potential wealth could abound. The harsh events occurring now are layers being ripped off your personality, to let the true You shine through; if you learn from these experiences quickly, your path in future will be easier. Be careful putting all of your faith in the material world; remember, coincidences happen too often for an "order" not to be real. A cosmic cycle that began in early April (and will last two years) is shifting from outward to inward focus; stop your aggression in life and let the work that you've done up until this point reap its rewards. The aggressive part of the cycle will come back in December, and your meditations in this phase will provide you with the directions you need to follow at that time.

TAURUS

If you've noticed a tendency to want to play hooky lately, you're right: Taurus, a vacation should be added to the budget. You might want to examine the last six months and see if your job has been denying the freedom and opportunity that you crave. New choices rain upon you; ignore them at your own risk. Put your pride in check, and get over any slash to your character. However, if it's just a run of bad times at the office, hold your ground; the adversities in your current role, at work and in relationships, are a passing phase. Weigh the changes and opportunities carefully over the next several months. After October, you'll find another chance — maybe a new city, a new job, a new profession altogether. Take that vacation to refresh yourself, and take a steady look at your situation. The universe may be saying, "Time to change jobs!" And you're never given a wish without the means to make it come true.

GEMINI

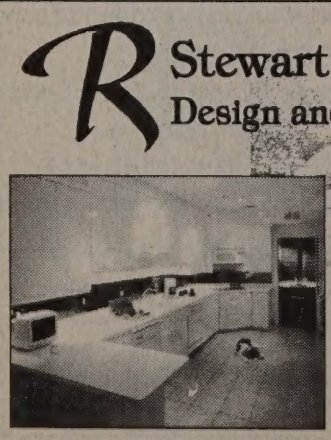
In a word: Introspection. Turn off the phone, create a private space, and take a long look at your accomplishments, your responsibility to self and the world, and the passions that make your life worthwhile. A void is being created around you. Weak relationships will end, your career may seem burdensome, the Hermit in you will want to retreat. This is a fire burning away non-essentials, destructive habits, people and situations that are no longer good for you. The void will draw empowering people, opportunities, and self-esteem to you, and the world will see the You that you are becoming. Clean out the closets — nothing but the essentials should be kept. Outworn clothes are screaming for Goodwill! Girl, your hair is due for a change! You are reclaiming your throne, reestablishing your grounds, rejoicing in the strength you hold over your life. You *are* taking charge here!

CANCER

Those of you born from July 15-August 1 will have your mettle tested. In all situations, ask yourself: "Do I truly require this, as part of my heart's desires, or does my ego want it?" You must live up to your own standards in life, or the world will seem much more challenging. Remember, keep your ego in check; if you walk with your head heavier than your feet, you'll most certainly fall. For those born between July 11-22, the watchword is "Health." Try to stay away from unneeded drugs, prescription or otherwise; your head is not clear, and the reasons behind your taking any drugs could be shrouded in deception. For all Cancerians, the coming months represent seeds of potentiality. Good harvests take patience — planting, watering, weeding, tending. What you can create is limited only by your imagination. Let your heart guide you, especially in career moves; from this potential, you will yield a happier state of mind, more money in your pocket, and a stable foundation beneath you.

LEO

Happy birthday, Leo! Over the last seven months, you should have noticed sudden and unexpected events in your environment. Confrontations with people have forced you to take a stand, proving who you are. The inner urges that have spawned this self-definition will get stronger and stronger, carrying you into the next century. Notice what area of your life has fallen into a space of disruption; this is the part of your life in need of some major examination. What is the universe trying to tell you? Better yet, what is unconsciously motivating your life? The outer manifestation of this disruptive motivation will cause you to close off your emotions and shut down your social involvement in the world. You will notice yourself in a state of prayer or meditation; you demand that the universe be still to your demands, while your subconscious calls out for some attention. Then, boom! it's your birthday! Sit back and enjoy all of your friends honoring you. Your biggest present is the coming year — everything you



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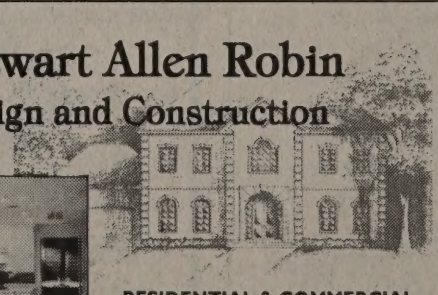

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project into the world will be from the viewpoint of what it can do for you, and you will find the meaning of accord in your life. (Hint: You will want to work in an environment that gives you the leeway that you desire and can produce the kind of success that will represent stability in the years to come.)

VIRGO

A cycle that began in the early part of last November is at a point of culmination, and now is the true beginning. On August 11, the forces that began the internal rearranging of your life will be past the preliminary stages of development; you'll move head-first into the consciousness-raising experiences of the future. Virgos born from August 23-31 will feel this most strongly, but all of you should be aware that you'll be tested soon. This test will clarify how well you truly know yourself. The world that you have created, including the people, must serve your greater good. Ruthlessness will not serve you; simply know what it is that you want and go after it, being willing to make a success of others as much as you make a success of yourself. Note: A setback could occur in the area of partnerships. Beware of your insecurities as new people enter your life, or that of your mate or best friends. Take the part of the observer, a passive stance, and understand that caution is the better part of avoiding catastrophe.

LIBRA

Stop! Look! Read! A transformative cycle is occurring, and it will produce changes in many areas. An influence that might at first have seemed discouraging or overwhelming will ultimately lead to the fulfillment of love, friendship, the manifestation of your dreams. New challenges may reroute the direction of your life. Health issues previously ignored become like an unavoidable zit. Urges rampage through you to tear down the structure of your life, so that you can build a firm foundation, wherein you are ruler and King. The only thing standing in your way, in all of this, is your inability to make a decision. You must put that in check! Until about December 4, you will be given a better chance to develop a more efficient and sensible plan or method of participating in the human race. Learn how to enjoy your life without forcing it into one direction or another. Signs indicate that you will handle this transition phase well, and you will experience harmonious change. But don't tempt fate, for you will undoubtedly lose. You've already begun a new pattern; sit back and enjoy it.

SCORPIO

You might have noticed that, in order to stay on the path that you've chosen, a great deal of changes have been required. These shifts have occurred to draw the genius out of you. Pay close attention to upsetting messages or information; they have more to tell you than what's on the surface. There is an indication of having conflicts with individuals in authority; if you're in a position of authority, watch for managerial stress. How well you address these issues will determine how your life will go over the next several years. Be good to yourself, and make choices which serve your better good. When you can do so, the challenges that appear will only confirm the solidity of your life.

SAGITTARIUS

Early Sags (November 23-30) should have noticed great changes occurring. This is a cycle of cleaning out clothes, outmoded structures, and old patterns. It's time to move over the obsolete and make room for the future. You could move to a new city, change careers, or completely transform your body — but be sure that you stay aware of the support group around you. This is a transit that encourages you to work toward the betterment of others as well as yourself. Part of you is aching to shake your booty on the dance floor, while the other side of your persona wants to be Sister Mary Helen, safe from pain, abuse, or germs. Happiness comes from living life in the middle, through exercising self-control. There could be some discouragements in relationships, producing a feeling of futility. Right action and a correct state of mind are the essential ingredients

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CAPRICORN

Life will no longer allow you to stand in the background, passively watching the world go by. A purging is occurring, setting you free (if you allow it to) of immaturities, overwhelming pride, and materialistic greed. Struggling careers should be abandoned so that something complementary can fall into your lap. Outworn "friendships" will be discarded to make way for more honest and empowering relationships. This cycle began in January, and it is your Fairy God-Mother in disguise; she will grant you wishes and make your dreams come true. Examine your social affairs carefully, deeply; judge them only by your exclusive and individual guidelines for living. Listen to your true, inner beliefs. It's time to lay down a foundation for how you want to establish your future. After September, you can progress forward, assisted by universal forces, plunging headlong through a curtain of energy that will break through feelings of mediocrity or non-contentment. The key is knowing what to sacrifice and what to cherish.

AQUARIUS

In April of 1995, Uranus — planet of freedom, intelligence, and spontaneity — began its seven-year dance through the window of Aquarius. This cycle, which intensified during January of this year, will last well into the next century and heralds a time of empowerment and upheaval. Be assured that the Cosmic Prankster will strike when you least expect it, usually right when you're ready to settle back into your old ways once again. You are being given opportunities to leap into the void of new experience — perhaps a new creative project utilizing all of your artistic skills. You are encouraged to learn from any misfortunes that life may throw at you now. If your car breaks down on the way to work, maybe it doesn't want to go there any more than you do. If you find yourself experiencing a string of bad luck, look for greater meaning in these harsh events. Your fixed Aquarian nature may be holding you in a circumstance that is no longer serving your greater good. Remember: Learning from these events is the key to your own empowerment.

PISCES

Universal forces are pulling out the flaming Mother Theresa in you. You could take care of a friend in need, or give your best friend a place to stay. This will make rest harder to find, and tension levels can get high. These challenges, and more to come, are designed to validate the foundation of your existance. Wearing your "irresponsible face," denying how you create your world, will only put roadblocks in your way. Your success depends on taking responsibility for your actions, doing what is right for you, and actively creating your world. Your future holds great promise, but it will be unfulfilled if you let your fishy upstream-downstream nature pull you to pieces, Pisces! And while you're at it: If you've not been good to your body in the past, some physical ailments may be unavoidable. Take care of yourself, and the future will start taking care of you, too. ▼

Joseph Molina is a practicing psychic who has studied the sacred sciences for more than 14 years. Specializing in Tarot combined with clairvoyant insights for personal growth, Joseph also teaches and guides students in their development. He is available for private consultation. For information, call 524-4411.

No apologies

Continued from page 37

be fired from our jobs just because we are gay or lesbian, there is no clear majority that supports our right to marry. That too has religious implications to some, no matter what we may think about the issue. We must work on changing thes!e attitudes.

...while a clear majority of citizens agrees that we should not be fired from our jobs, there is no clear majority that supports our right to marry.

None of us is perfect, and neither is any politician. Until we provide political cover by educating a society about our issues, no politician will do all that we want. Any candidate who supports all that we want clearly could not get elected and thus could not do anything. If we choose not to support President Clinton after all his administration has done for our community, then we are in fact sending a message that we are an ungrateful bunch of political neophytes who don't deserve to be helped. We will not make such a mistake, of course, and attempts by gay Republicans to turn us from this party and this candidate which have helped us in historic and practical ways to wend our way through this less-than-perfect society will be to no avail. ▼

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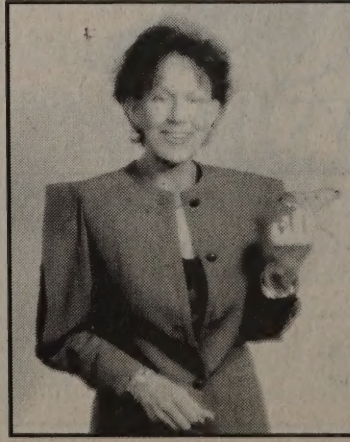

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Manchester

Continued from page 46

I just sang at the Stand for Children march in Washington, D.C., where there were well over 300,000 people. It was sponsored by her organization. She's just an extraordinary thinker. She and her husband are very passionate humanists.

I really appreciate your time, especially after hearing that you have kids also.

I have a lot of gay friends who have kids...

What I meant was that everything else you're doing *plus* having kids.

Maybe that's why I'm so tired at night. ▼

Melissa Manchester can be seen in Andrew Lloyd Webber—Music of the Night *at Houston's Brown Theater in the Wortham Center, July 23-28, 1996. Tickets are $25-$45 and are on sale at all TicketMaster locations.*

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Silent killer

Continued from page 39

Breast self-examination should be performed monthly, 7-10 days after the menstrual period, beginning at age 20. Many cancers are discovered by women in this fashion, and a breast lump should never be ignored, even though the fear associated with finding one can be paralyzing. Most are benign, but even cancerous ones are best treated early and aggressively. Breast cancer treatment will be addressed next month in a companion article by Dr. Allene King.

Many of us in the lesbian community are at higher risk for the development of breast cancer. The absolute risk probably falls somewhere between one in three and one in nine. More research is needed on the subject, but in the meantime we can all become responsible for our own health, live healthy lives, and advocate for more research into breast cancer. Breast cancer affects every American, directly or indirectly, and whether the incidence is one in three or one in nine, this disease has reached epidemic proportions. ▼

Susan Fan, M.D., is medical director of Fannin Street Imaging.

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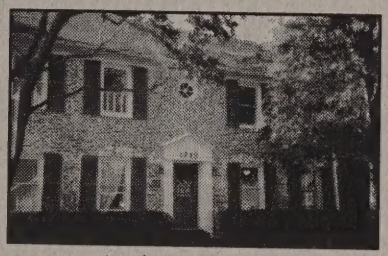

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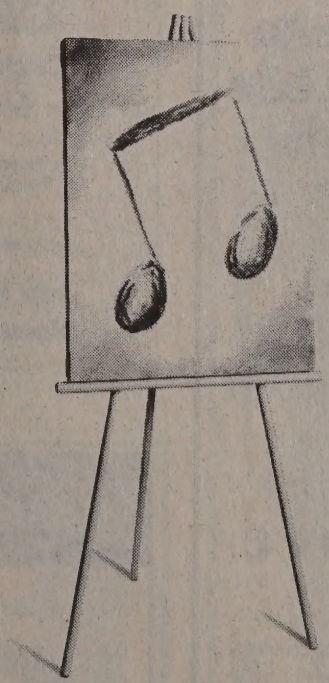

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The examined life

Continued from page 55

man will drop or neglect old friends the minute a new love affair starts. Yet I have been told time and again by older gay men that, when they look back on their lives, it is their friends who in the long run have added as much or even more to the quality of their lives than their lovers.

It is not necessary to give up on romantic love to avoid the bad effects of the religion of romance. No one is going to do that anyway. Romantic love is one of the great delights in life. It is only necessary to change the way we think about it. All we have to do to avoid these pitfalls is to come to understand clearly that romantic love isn't the *only* delight in life, not the only value worth pursuing. That simple understanding can have very positive effects.

If we don't make sexual and romantic love the one value in life, we will be less likely to have unrealistic expectations of what it can provide. We won't image, for instance, that it can eliminate the occasional loneliness that is part of being human, or that it alone is the key to self-esteem or a sense of meaning. When we are between engagements it can help us not to feel desperate, or that life is meaningless, flat, and empty when we are not romantically entangled. It can make it possible to valuetime spent alone as a valuable opportunity to get to know ourselves. It can help us approach prospective partners open-eyed, without undue dependency, and without rushing things. It can encourage us to focus on having rich and satisfying lives both when we are partnered and when we are single. ▼

Reprinted with permission from Frontiers Newsmagazine. Tom *Moon is a psychotherapist in private practice in San Francisco. Call him with questions or comments at 415/626-1346.*

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Caring for another

Continued from page 51

appoint a decision-maker and a substitute so that authority is in place when needed. This inexpensive document will cover far more circumstances than simply adding the caregiver as a signatory on a bank account. A special power of attorney is also available in Texas that will allow a person to name a caregiver specifically to make health care decisions. This authority is especially important if the caregiver is not a relative. Difficulties can also arise if the children or other relatives of the incapacitated person cannot agree on the type of health care. The health care power of attorney can eliminate the problem because one person can be given the bottom-line decision-making authority for the needs of the incapacitated person.

More complete planning can be done by creating a revocable living trust. This document allows a person to maintain control of trust assets as long as he or she is able. When the elder or ill person has been declared incapacitated by his or her doctor, the person named to continue the financial management steps in to take control of the trust assets. The revocable living trust may have the added benefit of disposing of the trust assets directly after the death of the trustor, even without the need for court-controlled probate proceedings. Of course, the trust must be drafted correctly and assets properly transferred into it for it to be beneficial, but the total cost of the trust can still be less than for an estate administration.

What happens if the caregiver predeceases the person being cared for? If the person is already incapacitated, the caregiver should make provisions for the transfer of care and authority as part of the responsibility his or her own estate planning. This can be done through the use of wills and other legal directives. If the person is still in good health, consideration should be given to his or her wishes about the choice of a substitute caregiver.

Being a caregiver of an elderly person or a friend who has become ill can be both frustrating and rewarding. It can also be easier and less costly with proper planning to avoid more complex and expensive court ordered guardianships. Like most other estate planning work, the failure to plan usually only results in fewer options and more expenses. ▼

Connie Moore is a partner at Moore & Hunt, a lesbian/feminist law firm based in Houston. Since graduating from the University of Houston Law Center, Connie has pursued the area of human rights law with an emphasis on lesbian and gay rights. Under Connie's guidance, Moore & Hunt is a part of the cooperating attorney network of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. In addition to feminist, lesbian and gay issues, the firm concentrates in family law, contract negotiations and disputes, corporation and small business formations, wills, estate planning and probate matters. For more information regarding this article, call 522-4282.

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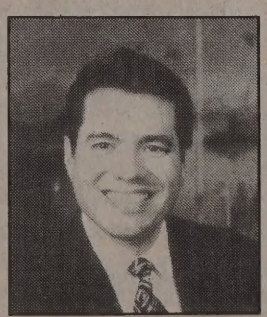

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Righting the wrong

Continued from page 43

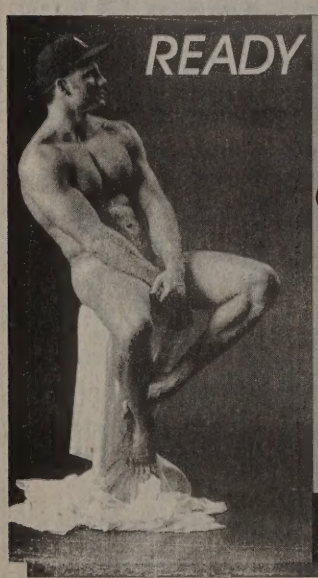
list of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and so on. My focus is getting the church, particularly the Lutheran church, to look at exactly what it means to nurture and responsibly raise people who are by nature homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, or whatever. We have to help them to live responsibly in the way that they were created to be, not in some way that someone else thinks they should be. The church hasn't done a very good job of looking at that."

Carlson doesn't advocate mere tolerance of gays and lesbians. "I don't really care for that word," he says. "For instance, I can 'tolerate' a root canal, but that doesn't mean that I particularly want to be around it! No one wants to be just tolerated. The issue is inclusivity, acceptance. That's what's important."

Children are definitely at risk even before the age of puberty, Carlson says. "I remember one girl who said that, as early as eight years old, she knew that she was attracted to her girl friends in a way that was different from the way other girls were attracted to their girl friends. It wasn't sexual at this time, since sexuality is at best an amorphous concept in a young child, but she knew at a very early age that she was looking at the world differently from her peers, peers who—when the term became valid as they grew into it—were heterosexual.

"By the time puberty sets in and they begin to identify themselves as gay or lesbian, children will have heard all sorts of stuff—perhaps at home, or at church, or at school—that might be mere passing comments but which root themselves into their minds. Perhaps the TV will show film of the gay pride parade, and a parent will issue a disgusted tsk. These thoughts get registered: Parents and/or the church think that being gay or lesbian is not a good thing. Then the child discovers that's what they are, and they come to believe that they are not a good thing.

"Even worse," Carlson notes, "is that the child becomes lost in a spiritual wilderness because they feel that they must choose between sexuality or religion. At church, they may be led to believe that their sexuality is inappropriate. In the gay community, they may be led to believe that they can't possibly be Christian because that's 'sleeping with the enemy,' which is, after all, the message that the Religious Right keeps hammering into everyone's head."



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Carlson sees a need to follow Stephen Sondheim's advice from the musical Into the Woods: "Careful, the things you say. Children will listen. Careful, the things you do. Children will see, and learn."

"When I do premarital counseling, I explain to the couple that, if they have children, then one thing that they must realize is that the child could be homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. This is not a cause for concern, but they should simply file it away in their mental Rolodex. Always keep that in front of you, I tell them, and be mindful of how you talk. If you make disparaging comments about gays and lesbians, if you lecture with bigotry and prejudice, you may be talking about someone much closer to home than you had thought."

"We not only can be, but we must be Christians; only, however, if we recognize that Christianity is progressive historical development still in the making."

— Rudolph Eucken, German philosopher (1846-1926)

Change is being made throughout the Christian churches. Larry Holm, rector of St. John the Divine, recently observed in a sermon that these questions are causing disturbances throughout the church, like two tectonic plates rubbing against each other causing small and medium earthquakes in the land. It is possible that this conflict may lead to a violent eruption, to a split within the land itself; it is also possible that the pressure on the plates will reconcile, will ease, and the land will find itself at peace again. Holm is not sure which scenario will prevail.

In the Episcopalian church, a great many more liberal voices are coming together to air their concerns and make their message heard. Every three years, the church holds its general convention to discuss issues important to the growth and change of the church. The next such convention will take place in late summer of 1997, and such questions as sanction of homosexual unions will be raised—and quite possibly even passed.

"The concern is whether or not such unions violate Scripture," Fox explains. "For example, Bishop Walter Rider was brought to presentment for ordaining an openly gay man as a priest who was also in a committed relationship. The question to be decided was whether or not Rider was violating his vows of ordination or the doctrine of the church when he did so. Not long ago, the decision of the ecclesiastical court, which is headed by seven elected bishops, was that Rider had not violated his vows, and that no doctrine opposed the ordination of a gay man or lesbian who was in a committed relationship. Since the church does not allow its ministers to have sex except within the sanctity of marriage, and since the church does not acknowledge a homosexual union in this way, this minister must remain celibate in order to keep his vows. This, however, may soon change."

Parishioners and clergy, churches and parishes, are rising up and unifying in a voice to defy the hateful claims of the Religious Right. "We are compelled by our vows to be obedient to our bishops," Fox explains, "and I want to be clear that I really love our bishops here in Texas. They have a more conservative viewpoint than I share, but they too are responsive to the needs and wishes of the parishioners. Some people leave the church over differences in opinion or interpretation of Scripture or mission; others of us stay and work to change the church from within. All of us, I believe, are working for the good of God and of the church."

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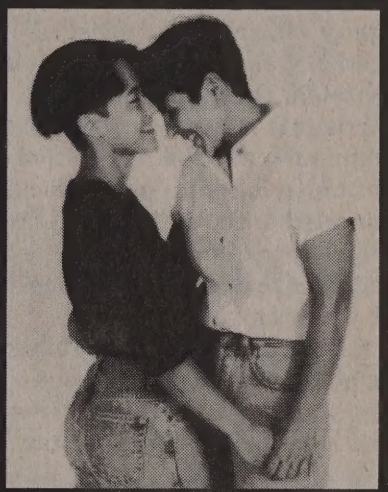

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governing body of the Lutheran church in this country, meeting every two years; the next general convention is next year. "Last year," Franke says, "there was a lot of good discussion on these points. The actual motion was tabled without a firm vote on the subject, but at least we're talking about it. We feel that we must be allowed to shape the thing which has helped to shape us.

"My viewpoint on the acknowledgment of same-sex marriages is that it adds a level of dignity, officialness, a sense of emotional and spiritual health that is vital for the couple. No one's marriage is private; it is tied to the community, and the recognition of that union is a vital part of feeling connected to the community. The changes are coming. I can't say how long it will take, but the changes are truly coming."

Carlson feels that the tabling of the matter at the last convention may actually be beneficial. "It was a good move politically. This may sound cowardly, but the truth of the matter is that the motion would have been defeated, even if by a small margin. And even if the defeat were 60-40, or even 55-45, the matter would not be put on the agenda again for years to come. By being patient, we will be able to enact the changes the first time through.

"Education is the key," he continues. "The ELCA has a lot of small rural congregations, the grassroots groups in rural Wisconsin and so on. Now, don't think I'm putting them down, because I was raised in one of those small rural churches. All I'm saying is that it's a question of education and exposure. True change must come from the bottom up, not be enforced from the top down."

Like his fellow clergy, Carlson is certain that positive changes are coming. "I talk to everyone I can. Next summer, some 30,000 to 35,000 kids will be gathering in New Orleans for a national youth gathering. They have an entire multicultural thing going, so I asked the director of this event, who was attending a synod convention in this area recently, if there was anything addressing gay and lesbian youth as well. They will have some tracts, some workshops—the issue will be addressed. The elephant in the living room—I'm referring to the counseling term that describes a large and obvious thing that families seem to know is there yet refuse to talk about—is finally being discussed."

"Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile.

— W. A. "Billy" Sunday, radio evangelist (1863-1935)

As more and more voices join the loving song that is truly the basis of Christianity as Jesus preached it, Carlson makes a simple observation and a warning to offer to the Religious Right:

"First," he notes, "the Religious Right are misusing the Scripture of St. Paul. I believe that St. Paul is the most misunderstood person in the world. If he were here today, he'd have nothing to do with the Religious Right, at least on this issue. St. Paul said that it is our life in Christ that is important, that binds us together. We are joined, brought in, actually becoming each other's helpers in the mutual task of the ministry.

"The other point is something that I mention at every workshop and discussion that I can. Everyone tries to point to the old Sodom and Gomorrah story as the basis for the claims against homosexuality. Go look again, because it really starts in the 17th chapter of Genesis. Strangers, angels in disguise, go to visit Abraham and Sarah, and they

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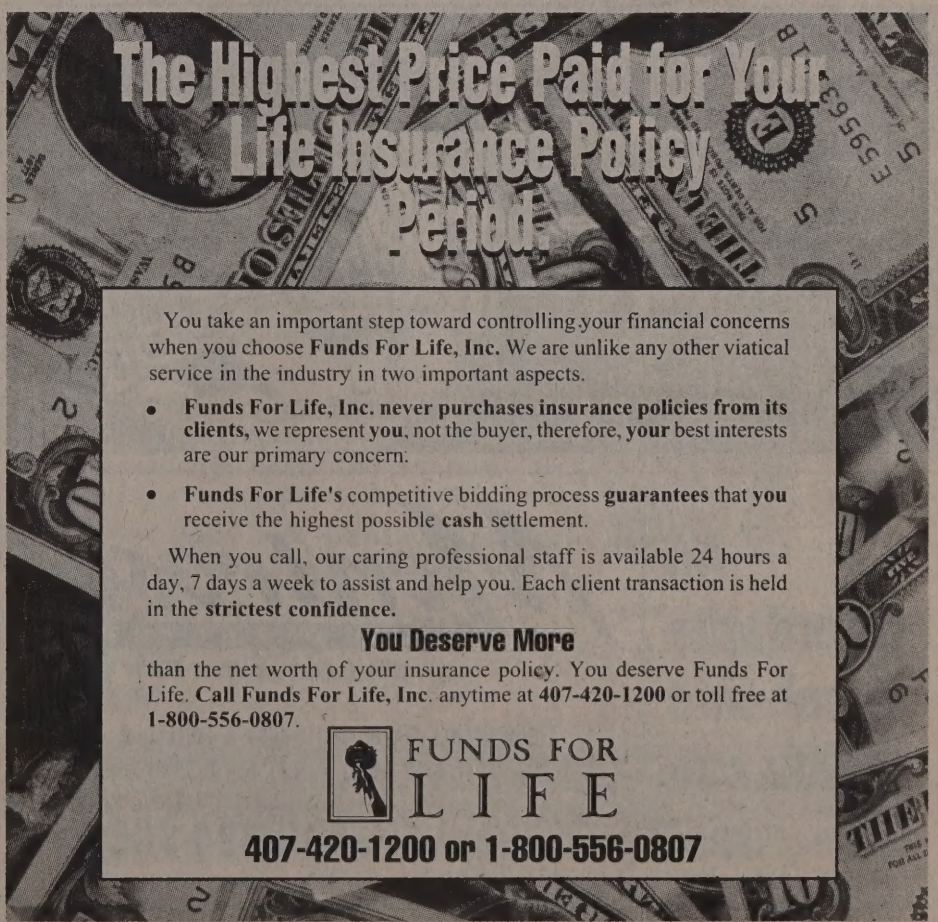
are shown proper hospitality. Then the strangers go visit Lot, and are again shown proper hospitality. But the people of Sodom see them not as welcome guests but as strangers—people 'different from ourselves'—whom they want to abuse, to humiliate, to control, to cast them out as outsiders."

Carlson raises an eyebrow in admonition. "If you want to take Scripture seriously, then by George let's take it seriously. Sodom was destroyed for not welcoming the stranger, for the denial of hospitality, for the selfish use of wealth. By excluding and humiliating and abusing gay and lesbian people—people they consider strangers, different from themselves—the Religious Right should beware. They may end up becoming the true Sodomites."

"Christianity might be a good thing if anyone ever tried it."

— George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Tristan A. MacAvery is a freelance writer in Houston who is amused at the thought of Pat Robertson being turned into a pillar of salt. While awaiting that event, he is actively syndicating his monthly column, "Bearly Surviving," to newsletters in five countries.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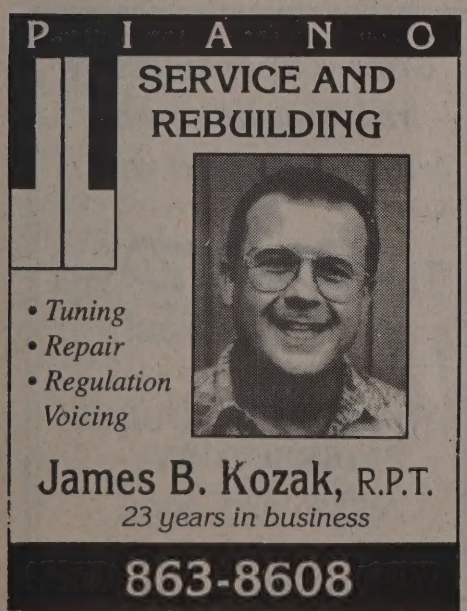

Mexico

Continued from page 57

downtown. Each little house is quite different from the other, and all are imaginatively furnished. The bathrooms are gaily tiled with good hot water, the swimming pool and gardens are beautiful, and the meals are varied and handsomely served. Prices at Villa Montana start around $95 per night.

Patzcuaro is dream town

A beautiful lakeside community, set at 7,250 feet in the Sierra Madre, is home to the Tarascan Indians, who fish, farm, and ply their crafts as they have for centuries. Patzcuaro is the dream town of many travelers, due in part to the combination of vivid Indian life, decent accommodations, and of course, its lake, studded with steep, green islands.

Unlike the other two towns, Patzcuaro lacks a lot of the colonial dazzle, but has instead a strong sense of character, expressed by the good-looking Tarascans one mingles with on every occasion. The Tarascan Indians are serious and enterprising, and possess a quiet independence which permits no one to say "cute little Indian." Tarascan women are quite regal in their long-sleeved, high-neck blouses, with the colorful, handwoven rebozos wrapped around their shoulders. A good place to appreciate these people is at La Casa de los 11 Patios, an 18th-century convent with high-quality shops featuring Tarascan handiwork. Wandering through, you'll encounter weavers producing beautiful bolts of cloth, and artists trimming the indigenous black lacquerware with gold.

To explore the lake, famous for its fishermen with their "butterfly" nets, go down to the dock and purchase a ticket for ride out to the island of Janitzio, largest of Lake Patzcuaro's five islands. A late afternoon sojourn is ideal, with the sun low in the sky.

Given our close proximity to Mexico, it seems a shame not to begin to explore the interior cities and their treasures. Mexico is such a beautiful and varied country, and the people are some of the warmest and most gracious in the world. These characteristics are often lost in the frantic pace and ostensibly "touristy" attitudes which prevail in the beach resort towns. Still, Mexico is not always the easiest country to travel in, and the words *enchantment* and *exasperation* are inseparable twins on any given day. The degree of pleasure one experiences often depends on a traveler's own response to this place. An ideal visitor to Mexico goes equipped with some knowledge of its complex past, the astonishments of its geography, its imposing archaeology, its riches in crafts, and an invisible valise full of relaxed, accepting attitudes. If you can visit Mexico free of prejudices, interested in rather than disturbed by modes of life that are not your accustomed pattern, you will be rewarded with a peek into a world quite different from your own, which brings its own, unique rewards. ▼

Sandra Wilkins is owner and president of The Travel Partnership, Inc., a travel company proud to serve gay and lesbian travelers. For more information, call 713/526-4471.

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No yuppie flu jokes

Continued from page 53

is twice as common in the African-American and Native-American populations, affecting both men and women. Only 12 percent of patients ever recover.

Myth: CFIDS is a harmless illness with fatigue as its primary symptom.

Fact: Dr. Mark Loveless, an infectious disease specialist who runs both an AIDS and CFIDS clinic, has stated that a "CFIDS patient feels every day significantly the same as an AIDS patient feels two months before death." One patient described the symptoms as a "cafeteria in a nightmare with each patient experiencing a horrendous array of horrors":

- Fatigue accompanied by nonrestorative sleep.
- Debilitating nausea and diarrhea
- Chronic sore throat
- Muscle and or joint pain
- Severe allergies
- Confusion and inability to think clearly
- Seizure-like episodes, fainting, and blackouts
- Depression and panic attacks
- Low body temperature, fever, and sweats

These are just a few of the most common symptoms. No one knows what causes the disease. What is understood is that the immune system under-reacts, overreacts, or reacts inappropriately to an invader. As a result, those of us with CFIDS are not able to fight off, or resist, infection. In essence, we are ambulatory incubators that catch any nearby virus and then nuture it until it becomes a debilitating illness.

What is of great concern to me is the high number of gay men and lesbians who suffer with CFIDS. It is my theory that this relates to what I refer to as the "Chronic Stress Syndrome." Stress, in a positive way, is the force that urges us forward. But, when stress activates the fight-or-flight response on a daily basis, we are left living in a constant state of tension and anxiety. It cannot be denied that even under the best of circumstances the lesbian and gay population lives under enormous stress due to intolerance, financial inequity, family problems, religious attacks, political underrepresentation, prejudice, and, in some cases, death as the result of hate crimes. As a result of these stressors, I believe there is a gross over-representation of the lesbian and gay community living with CFIDS.

The CDC now receives 100 calls a day from CFIDS patients and physicians each week. "CFIDS calls are outnumbered only by AIDS-related calls," the *CFIDS Chronicle* recounted in 1989. "Thousands of Social Security and private disability claims list CFIDS as the primary cause of disability. This disease will cost the U.S. billions in lost productivity and health costs. It could easily dwarf the economic effects of AIDS and sap this nation of its economic vitality."

I have spent the last 18 months depressed, confused, misunderstood, and, at times, hopeless. I lost my greatest passion, the ability to write. I couldn't find the words I needed to express myself, and I silenced myself for more than a year. Susan Levine, M.D., wrote about CFIDS: "This is a silent illness which robs people of their day-to-day sanity." Well, I allowed this illness to borrow my sanity for awhile, but I refuse to let CFIDS keep it.

I have grown through this illness, but I can't pretend that I am fully aware of its meaning or of its purpose in my life. Still, I am now ready to move beyond this disease. For now, I am just thankful to be

Continued on page 74

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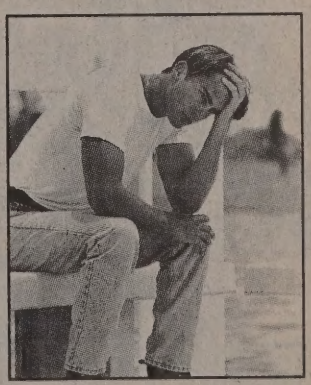

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National Briefs

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of the legislation charged that the law is excessively broad and could be interpreted to include banning merely discussing abortion, homosexuality, safe-sex practices, and similar topics. The federal court judges agreed, and said the law's reference to terms such as "indecency" and "patently offensive material" were too vague and not acceptable standards for regulating free speech. The government is expected to appeal the ruling.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL BOARD CAN'T DECIDE ON HARASSMENT QUESTION

DETROIT —In a delay that angered many, the Allen Park School Board decided not to decide yet on whether gay and lesbian students—or even students who are just believed to be homosexual—should be protected under the district's anti-harassment policies. The mother of a 14-year-old student at Allen Park High School asked the trustees in May to include anti-harassment policies that prohibit gay and lesbian students from being attacked or harassed on school grounds by other students. But the school board decided it wanted to take "more time to study the issue" before making a decision. Raymond Salliotte, an attorney representing the student and his family, told the board members they should be ashamed of themselves for even having to take this long to decide on such a basic issue. "It's a sad day in Allen Park," Salliotte told the board.

SCHOOL TO BE RENAMED IN HONOR OF HARVEY MILK

SAN FRANCISCO —The San Francisco school board trustees have voted, after several years of controversy and one earlier failed attempt, to rename the Douglass Elementary School in honor of assassinated gay supervisor Harvey Milk. The school will now officially be known as the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy and will emphasize classwork in civil rights areas. Milk was shot along with Mayor George Moscone in 1978 by Dan White, who had just resigned from his seat on the board of supervisors and who was an outspoken opponent of gay rights. Several parents at the school board meeting raised objections both to naming the school after Milk and to the vote itself, which they said came without adequate time for public discussion.

N.H. SCHOOL DISTRICT CHANGES ANTI-GAY POLICY

MERRIMACK, N.H. —As expected, following an election that ended a narrow anti-gay school board majority, the Merrimack trustees voted 3-2 to end a policy adopted last year that prohibited discussions of homosexuality in the district's schools or portraying homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. The board then adopted a new policy that bars schools from endorsing or supporting activities that encourage any sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation among students.

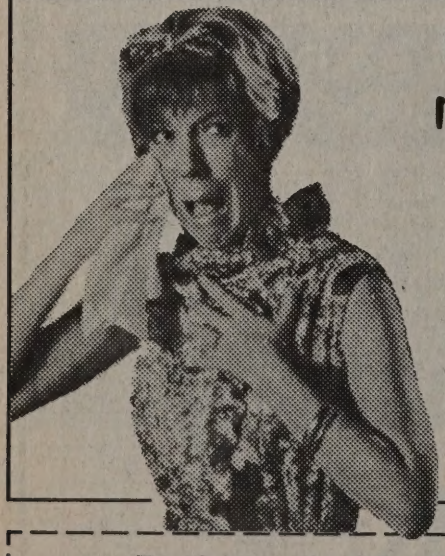
SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

DELAWARE GOVERNOR OKS MARRIAGE BAN

DOVER, DEL. —Delaware Gov. Thomas Carper has signed a measure that prevents same-sex marriages, even if legally performed elsewhere, from being recognized in the state. The new law restricts the state to recognizing only marriages between "one man and one woman." Reacting to the possibility that Hawaii's courts may order that state to recognize same-sex marriages and give licenses to gay and lesbian couples, other states and conservatives in the U.S. Congress have been frantically working on laws to block recognition of such unions. In a related development, Michigan Gov. John Engler also signed a similar bill passed by the state legislature earlier this year prohibiting the state from recognizing same-sex marriages, even if performed legally in other states. Meanwhile, California's just-released Field Poll indicates that the majority of those in the state—57 percent—oppose legally recognizing same-sex marriages. Overall, only 35 percent of Californians who were surveyed say the state should extend to same-sex couples the same legal status as heterosexual unions. Some 8 percent had no opinion or didn't answer the question.

COMMITTEE APPROVES DOMA

WASHINGTON —The U.S. House Judiciary Committee voted 20-10 to approve the proposed Defense of Marriage Act that would effectively exclude same-sex marriages under federal law. The vote was largely along party lines, with two Democrats on the committee joining 18 Republicans in voting for the measure, and the other 10 Democrats voting against it. Rights activists have all but abandoned hope of stopping the bill in the House, and are trying to derail the measure in the Senate by attaching the Employment Non-Discrimination Act barring employment bias based on sexual orientation to the anti-gay marriage measure there.



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MINNESOTA DEMS: NO DISCRIMINATION—EXCEPT IN MARRIAGE

MINNEAPOLIS —Minnesota Democrats adopted a full 100 resolutions at their annual state convention, rejecting just one proposed platform statement—a resolution supporting same-sex marriage rights. The Democratic Farm Labor Party (as the Democrats are known in Minnesota) overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning "all forms of discrimination," but apparently decided they didn't really want to actually endorse banning discrimination in marriage rights.

world*briefs*

ICELAND OKS SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND —Iceland's Parliament has approved a bill that would give same-sex couples the right to legally marry, following a pattern of extending a slightly limited form of matrimony and state recognition established in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The new legislation permits same-sex couples to have a civil marriage ceremony and the same tax, insurance, and inheritance status as married opposite-sex couples. Like the Scandinavian version of same-sex marriage, the new law does not, however, allow gay and lesbian couples to adopt or to have children by artificial insemination—although it does allow for joint custody if one of the two spouses already has a child. The new law does not require churches in the nation, which have generally opposed such unions, to perform religious ceremonies for same-sex couples if they do not wish to.

BRITISH PM CRITICAL OF GRANTS TO GAY GROUPS FROM LOTTERY

LONDON —Prime Minister John Major told Parliament that grants from proceeds of the country's popular National Lottery to London and Leicester gay and lesbian organization—one a community center, the other a gay and lesbian police officers' group—were "ill-founded and ill-judged." The two grants, totaling slightly more than $140,000, do not "reflect the way Parliament and the public expected lottery money to be spent," Major said during a speech in the House of Commons.

CANADA RIGHTS BILL MOVES ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

OTTAWA —Largely considered a formality, Canada's Senate has followed the May 9 lead of Parliament's House of Commons and approved federal legislation outlawing bias based on sexual orientation. The bill now only requires the assent of the governor general, representing Queen Elizabeth II as Canada's titular head of state, to become part of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

CANADIAN COMMISSION ORDERS GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND PARTNER BENEFITS

OTTAWA —The Canadian Human Rights Commission has ordered the government to offer healthcare benefits to the gay and lesbian partners of national workers the same as it does to the spouses of married employees. The ruling was prompted by complaints by two gay federal government workers and applies only to the country's civil service employees. The commission ruled that it was "discriminatory to deny benefits to those in a same-sex relationship while extending the same benefits to heterosexual couples."

AIDS

L.A. WOMAN IDENTIFIED AS FIRST WITH RARE FORM OF HIV VIRUS

LOS ANGELES — Officials with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention say an unnamed Los Angeles woman has been confirmed as the first person in this country to be diagnosed with Group O HIV, a strain of the virus that is largely restricted to West Africa. According to the CDC report, the woman apparently was infected in her West African homeland before coming to the U.S. Health officials said standard HIV tests should be modified to detect the Group O strain to prevent accidental contamination of the nation's blood supply. Current HIV tests usually do not detect the Group O strain of the virus.

SINGAPORE SCIENTISTS FIND HIV-FIGHTING SUBSTANCE IN HERBS

SINGAPORE — Singapore scientists reporting in two research journals say a chemical compound derived from some 75 traditional herbs may be useful in fighting HIV. Dr. Sim Keng Yeow of the National University of Singapore said that the researchers had found that the chemical they isolated from the herbs could inhibit HIV-1 protease, an enzyme essential for HIV to develop. Yeow cautioned, however, that the discovery was not a cure for AIDS and only a preliminary finding. In a related development, researchers at the China Academy of Preventive Medicine in Beijing announced that an experimental herbal medicine, known as Saidefu, may have helped eliminate HIV in one patient and helped others become well enough that they could stop hospital care and go home. The researchers said, however, that Saidefu had only been tested on five patients so far and that the tests had been limited to only a three-month period. They said that much more testing would be required because herbal remedies that often appear effective initially may have only a temporary or transient effect.

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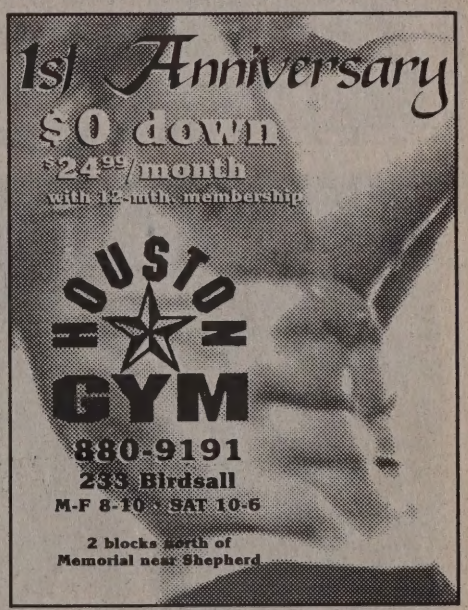

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PHYSICIAN WOULD LIKE BOXERS TESTED FOR HIV

ATLANTA — Dr. Robert Voy, the physician heading the medical team for athletes at the upcoming summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, said at a press conference that he believes boxers at the event should be tested for HIV prior to bouts, even though most medical experts say the risk of transmission of the virus in the ring is extremely small. Voy said he was aware that no one had ever been infected with the virus during a boxing match, but said he would like to avoid "the first one that happens."

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NAVY RESEARCHERS ANNOUNCE EXPERIMENTAL NEW AIDS THERAPY

BETHESDA, MD. — Researchers with the U.S. Navy say they may have discovered a new therapy to help prevent or limit the spread of HIV in infected patients. Scientists at the Naval Medical Research Institute say the treatment involves dramatically increasing the number of uninfected CD4 T-cells—or white blood cells that are the target of the virus—in patients infected with the disease. The Navy researchers cultured the T-cells of 10 intermediate-stage AIDS patients, whose immune systems were still fairly intact. Even more significant, when the researchers stimulated uninfected T-cells and exposed them in test tubes to HIV, the cells were highly resistant to the virus. The scientists say that if the technique works in humans, it might prevent the deterioration of the body's immune system and counteract some symptoms of HIV infection. The Navy will begin a small-scale clinical trial to test the safety of the new treatment this summer, using the same 10 infected patients whose blood cells were used in making the cultures.

RUSSIA'S HIV PASSPORT LAW STILL A MESS

MOSCOW — Officials with Russia's foreign ministry have told reporters that the country's law that requires some foreign visitors to provide proof that they are not infected with HIV is only being sporadically applied. Nearly two years after being approved by the Russian Parliament, the law was technically supposed to be fully enforced by May 20, but foreign ministry officials acknowledged that Russian consulates around the world still have no guidelines on how the testing requirement is to be fulfilled by visitors applying for passports. An official with the Russian embassy in London told reporters earlier in June that they had so far received nothing about the HIV testing requirement and simply weren't doing anything about it. The Russian consulate in New York City also does not have HIV test results listed as a requirement for obtaining a passport there. Among other bureaucratic snafus, officials are still working on a health ministry requirement that the test results be in Russian, making it difficult for consulates in most countries to fulfill even if they had official guidelines on the new requirements

MARIJUANA USE INITIATIVE QUALIFIESFOR BALLOT

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. — Marijuana activist Dennis Peron has turned in nearly 800,000 signatures to qualify a voter initiative for the November ballot that would make the medicinal use of marijuana legal in the state. Peron is the founder of San Francisco's Cannabis Buyers' Club, which distributes marijuana to seriously ill patients—including many AIDS patients—whose physicians have recommended they smoke pot to ease symptoms. The proposed measure would not make personal, recreational use of marijuana legal, but it would prevent prosecution of healthcare workers who prescribe pot or patients who smoke it at the direction of their doctor for medical reasons.

ZAMBIA TO STUDY HERBAL AIDS MEDICINES

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA — Katele Kalumba, Zambia's health minister, has announced new guidelines that will encourage the government to conduct clinical trials on traditional herbal medicines used by many of the country's rural population. The clinical trials for traditional healing medicines will particularly focus on herbal remedies used by traditional healers for people with AIDS and will study efficacy and safety of such herbal medicines.

PRINCESS DI IGNORES CRITICISM & VISITS AIDS CLINIC

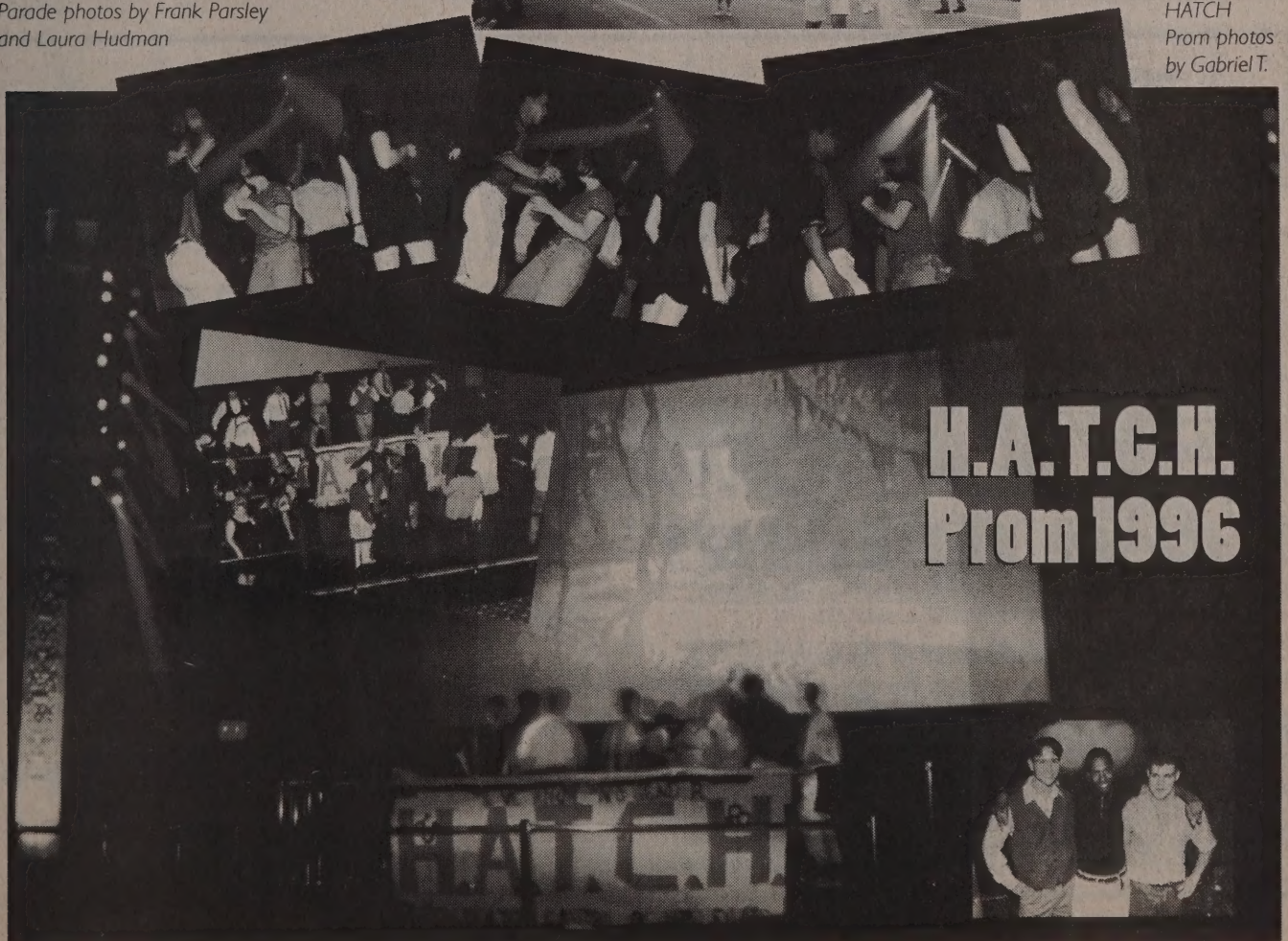
LONDON — Princess Diana ignored growing criticism in the British press that the threat of AIDS had been overplayed and accompanied Aileen Getty, daughter of the billionaire philanthropist J. Paul Getty Jr., to the Mortimer

Continued on page 75

Houston Gay Pride Parade 1996

Parade photos by Frank Parsley and Laura Hudman

H.A.T.C.H. Prom 1996



HATCH Prom photos by Gabriel T.

No yuppie flu jokes

Continued from page 69

able to write again. My first crusade is to have the illness renamed. The term "Chronic Fatigue" minimizes this monstrous yet subtle disease, which is about so much more than being tired. I am going to organize a movement to have the CDC change the name to address the part of this disease that is most relevant—immune system dysfunction. I propose that the illness be renamed Chronic Immune Dysfunction Disorder.

Next, I want to to research the impact this disease is having on our community. The gay and lesbian community is already overrepresented in the HIV/AIDS and the breast cancer statistics. We do not need another epidemic in our community. Perhaps these crusades are my purpose and will eventually prove the gift behind the illness. I am only absolutely sure that I will be silent no longer. I am a person living with Chronic Immune Dysfunction Disorder. Hear me roar.

Lacey Lewis is conducting a survey among lesbians, both for the name change to Chronic Immune Dysfunction Disorder and for its impact on our community. Please write to:

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The Summit

National Briefs

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Market Centre, a clinic for people with AIDS/HIV. Ms. Getty is herself HIV positive and the former wife of Christopher Wilding, Elizabeth Taylor's son. She said she became infected several years ago following a sexual relationship with an infected man. Diana is the royal patron of Britain's National AIDS Trust and opened the Mortimer Market Centre in 1994. British newspapers and politicians have recently been highly critical of AIDS agencies in the country, charging that they had overplayed the threat of AIDS spreading among heterosexuals to increase the funding they receive.

STUDY: POSSIBLE GREATER RISK OF HIV TRANSMISSION DURING ORAL SEX

CHICAGO — A research study published in the journal *Science* reports that the risk of transmission of the simian version of HIV (known as SIV, and closely related to HIV) through the mouth may be higher than had been believed. The Harvard University researcher found that six of the seven rhesus monkeys they swabbed with SIV in the back of the throat became infected with the virus, according to the report. The researchers also found, surprisingly, that far less of the virus—6,000 times less—was needed to trigger an infection than is required to infect the monkeys rectally with the virus. The study's startling results are so unlike other research and data about oral transmission risks that many AIDS and health workers immediately questioned the findings. Among other things, federal studies have only documented 15 cases of known oral transmission and infection of HIV since the epidemic began. Also, AIDS experts point out, unprotected oral sex has continued to be popular among gay men in the U.S. while the infection rate among homosexuals has steadily declined since the routes of transmission were discovered.

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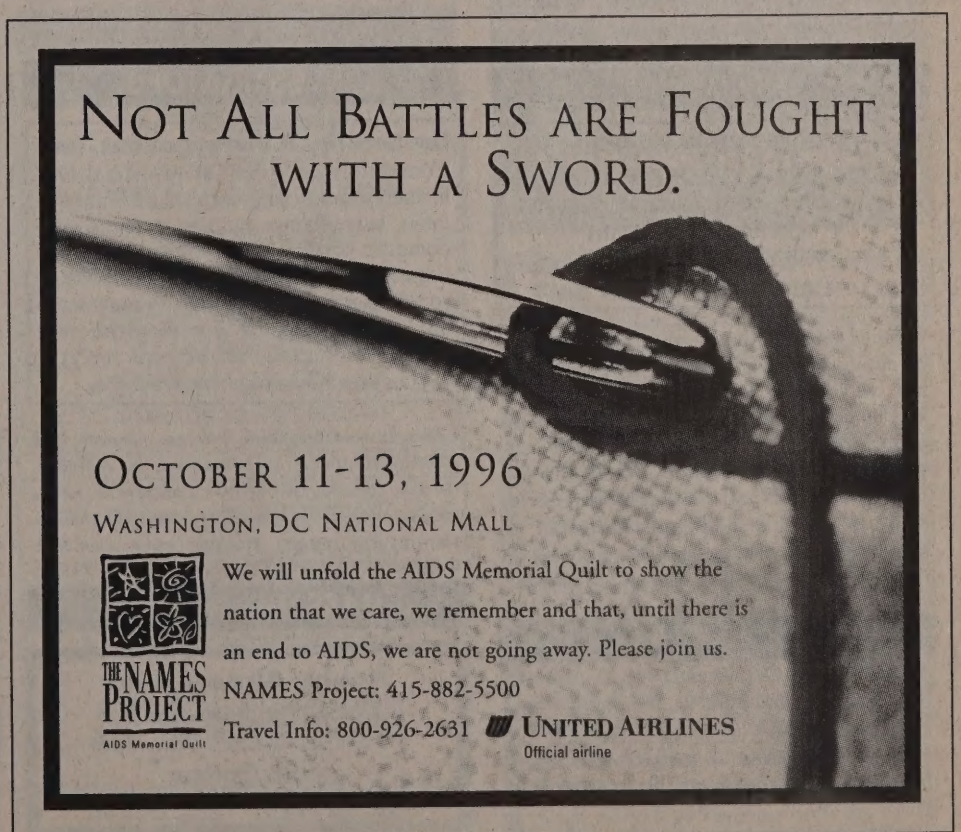
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Poor Misunderstood Mickey

by Deb Price

Poor, misunderstood Mickey Mouse. No, better make that rich, misunderstood Mickey Mouse. Southern Baptists don't want him playing with their children anymore. They say he's changed and can't be trusted. In a boycott resolution that hit Mickey right between his world-famous ears, the Baptists accuse his Disney Co. of being so gay-friendly that it's abandoning "its historic commitment to traditional family values."

Well, it's just not so. The grown-ups behind this Mickey Mouse controversy have their facts all wrong. Yes, Mickey has plenty of gay friends. After all, he's worked in showbiz more than 60 years. And, yes, Disney now makes a policy of treating gay employees and patrons fairly. But Mickey and his Disney pals have never indulged in the fantasy that the traditional family—papa, mama and 2.5 kids—is the secret to everyone's happiness. Their movies and cartoons have always valued love, kindness, honesty, and individuality, not just one style of living.

Disney's past perhaps confuses Southern Baptists because history isn't an easy subject for them: Their denomination didn't get around to apologizing for its defense of slavery until last year. Maybe a quickie course on Disney's world will refresh a few memories.

Since we're dealing with the kind of folks who think they saw S-E-X in the stardust of *The Lion King* (1994), maybe it's not best to start by mentioning that the lyrics in *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) were written by an openly gay man, Howard Ashman. And they probably don't want to hear that Walt Disney said, "I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I've ever known."

Instead, let's lower the lights and review Disney's family fare: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937): Young woman flees quite dysfunctional family (stepmother intent on cutting out her heart) to live happily with very short, untidy men. Shows how much fun seven guys can have with one bar of soap.

A friend of Mickey (or a chip off the old block.)

Pinocchio (1940): Unmarried, warmhearted woodcutter wants son. Zero interest in acquiring one through traditional methods. With fairy's help, he gets well-built little guy, a chip off the old block.

Bambi (1942): Single mother—let's call her Jane Doe—bears a son. Absentee father nowhere in sight when they're reduced to eating bark to survive. Father speaks to Bambi only after Jane is fatally shot. Bambi fathers twins but skips out before their birth.

Double Trouble (1946): Daisy breaks up with Donald Duck because he mumbles. Donald hires a double to sweet-talk her. Double takes Daisy into tunnel of love. Donald follows; feathers fly. Donald and double emerge embracing. They dash off together, leaving furious Daisy behind.

Cinderella (1950): Pretty young maid escapes ugly home life.

Peter Pan (1953): Flighty young fellow in tights drops in on Darling traditional family, goes back to live with Lost Boys and the fairy who has a crush on him.

Donald's Diary (1953): Donald Duck recounts his "narrow escape" from getting into a nightmare of a marriage.

Pollyanna (1960): Relentlessly upbeat orphan moves in; forces aunt to enjoy life.

The Jungle Book (1967): Boy is raised by wolves.

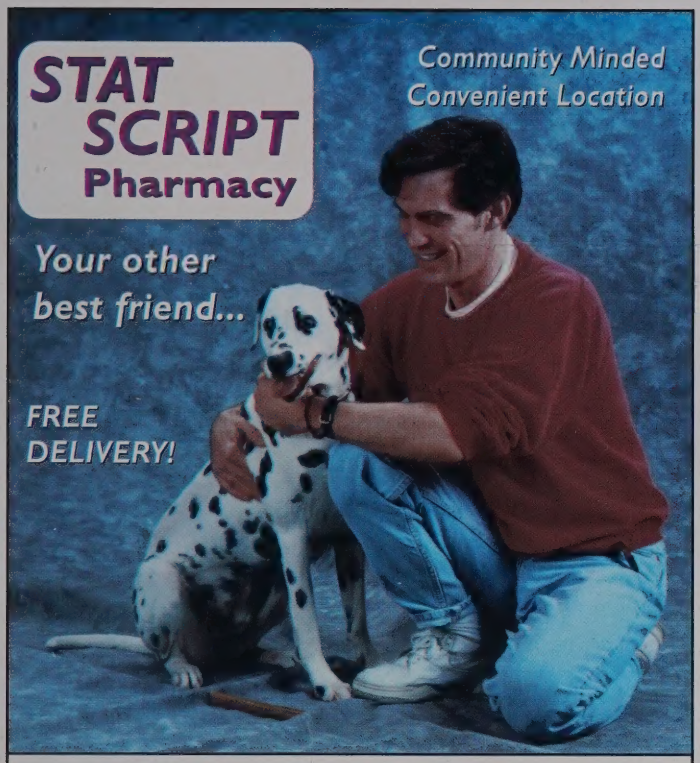
So you see, Disney's never pretended that one particular family configuration is every heart's desire. Now the Disney employee health insurance plan acknowledges that some committed couples are gay. And a Disney book recognizes that some teens are, too.

The Southern Baptist Convention would have us believe it's wrong for Disney to treat gay people fairly. That's a wickedly false charge, of course, one the Baptists will someday regret. As a good fairy pointed out to slow-learning Pinocchio once upon a time, "A lie keeps growing and growing until it's as plain as the nose on your face."

Meanwhile, Mickey Mouse and his Disney pals will keep working their magic. And millions more children will learn to follow their hearts.

Deb Price is a freelance writer at the Washington bureau of the Detroit News. *Her e-mail address is debprice@erols.com.*

Editor's Note: *Although Disney is not likely to change its policy due to the actions of the Southern Baptist Convention, it is still very important for us to let them and others know of our support for Disney's true "family values." Take a minute to write Disney and say thanks. The address is Disney Corporation, 500 South Buena Vista Avenue, Burbank, CA 91521. Telephone: 818/560-1000.*



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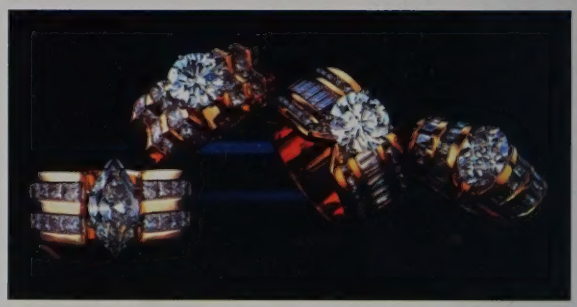

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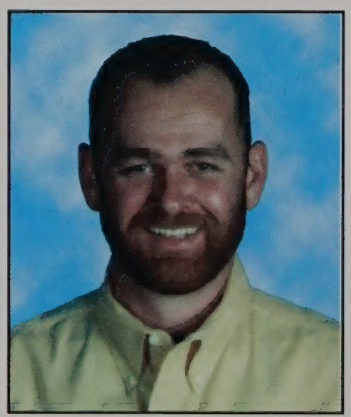

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